

DANCER IN THE DARK

BY

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**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

OVERTURE

The theme from the "Next-to-Last-Song" in a simple arrangement. It plays before the curtains are drawn.

1. REHEARSAL ROOM. INT/DAY.

Selma and Kathy rehearse an amateur theater production. Selma sings and dances to an upbeat piano accompaniment. She performs with naiveté and abandon, but with little talent. She is ; radiantly happy.

SELMA:

"Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens..."

Kathy dances on-stage carrying a paper rose and a toy cat. She shows them off as she dances. She is pretty good. She shakes her head. Exits quickly, reappears with new items: an old kettle and a pair of mittens.

SELMA:

"Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens..."

KATHY:

(to Selma)

It's really no good _

Selma creases up with laughter. Kathy brings in an armful of paper sacks.

SELMA:

(pronouncing with difficulty)

"Brown paper packages tied up with string."

KATHY:

(to Selma)

It's impossible. I'm too old for this.

SELMA:

(to Kathy)

Hey, it's going fantastic. Listen to your heart, Kathy!

"These are a few of my favorite things"

more singing

Kathy rushes off in a fumble and brings back everything at once.

SELMA:

(stumbling with lyrics, giggling)

"Cream colored ponies and crisp apfelstrudels.
Doorbells and sleigh bells and snitzel with noodles.
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings,
these are a few of my favorite things."

Kathy exits, shaking her head. Selma finishes with two tricky tap dance steps, and can do no more; she falls over and laughs. Boris and Samuel watch. Samuel's eyes are wet with laughter. He wipes away his tears. Boris is not laughing.

BORIS:

You sure you think she's good enough for the part?
Her singing's very strange, and she can't dance.

SAMUEL:

Oh, come on, it's the first time she's tried it. She just has a particular way of approaching the song. Sure, it's not perfect, but Selma has everything our Maria needs. She's a natural.

Samuel blows his nose, goes on laughing.

At the end of the music, Selma does a few slap-taps on her way off stage.

SAMUEL:

(in earnest)

No, no, Selma... I told you... There is no tapping in
"Sound of Music"!

SELMA

(pleading)

Come on, Samuel...just a little... It IS a musical,
right?

Kathy walks up to Selma.

KATHY:

What a mess! I'm not a dancer!

SELMA:

No, no, we looked like a million dollars! We're amateurs, and that's the way it should be. Listen your

heart, that's all that matters...
(mischievously)

Cvalda!

KATHY:

Don't call me that! You know I don't want you to
call me that!

Boris is still observing them.

BORIS:

She's got glasses! If I'm playing Von Trapp, I'm not
sure Maria should have glasses.

SAMUEL:

You're so young. Can't you see what kind of Maria
we've got here? No, we'll never improve on her,
spectacles or no spectacles.

Samuel smiles to Selma and Kathy.

SELMA:

(to Samuel)

It's hard to dance when there's no rhythm. Can't we
find somebody to play drums?

SAMUEL:

(smiles at her)

That's a good idea. We'll look into that.

2. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM/BATHROOM INT/DAY.

Selma, in the bathroom, takes a large sheet of paper from her shoulder-bag, unfolds it. It is
covered in rows of big letters and numbers. She studies it and memorizes it.

3. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM INT/DAY.

Kathy and the doctor wait. Selma enters.

DOCTOR:

Are you ready now?

*first act - up
tension*

SELMA:

Yes, I am ready.

He points at his chart. Selma calls out the numbers and letters he indicates.

DOCTOR:

Well, well, well. That's fine, Mrs. Jezková, your eyes seem to be doing all right. I see no reason why you shouldn't go on working at that machine of yours. I'll write to the plant and let them know.

Selma smiles to Kathy, who smiles back in relief. They leave.

4. STREET WITH SHOPS EXT/DAY.

Selma and Kathy are window-shopping. They pass a jewelry store.

SELMA:

A *Cvalda* is a big and happy one. You're so serious always, Kathy. And yet deep down inside-- you are a *Cvalda*, I know it. Big and happy.

KATHY:

Hey, come on! I'm not big!

SELMA:

No, but *inside*. Being a bit more happy wouldn't hurt you.

Something occurs to Selma. She pulls Kathy through the doorway into the shop. Kathy resists; she doesn't want to enter the expensive store.

5. JEWELRY STORE INT/DAY.

Selma tugs Kathy to the counter. The shop assistant scrutinizes them.

SELMA:

(smiles)

Hello! We are Von Trapps. We wish to see the biggest ruby in your store.

SHOP ASSISTANT:

The Von Trapps?

SELMA:

Yes, I'm Selma and this is Cvalda! I am very interested in precious stones. They become me, my admirers tell me-- what do you think?

SHOP ASSISTANT:

Well, I guess--

He unlocks a glass case and brings out a tray of rubies.

SELMA:

Is that all you have? I imagined something much bigger. Perhaps a necklace or a ring with a big stone-

-

SHOP ASSISTANT:

I can obtain something like that-- if you are interested, Ma'am.

SELMA:

(winks to Kathy)

I am indeed! Let me have the necklace and the ring and-- a bracelet-- but make sure it has seven stones; I have seven children...by marriage that is.

Kathy is beside herself. Selma winks at her. Assistant finds some forms.

SHOP ASSISTANT:

Who shall I contact when your purchases arrive?

SELMA:

Don't worry about that! I'll drop in again.

6. BUS INT/DAY.

Kathy is furious. Selma is laughing. They are on the bus.

KATHY:

I'm not shopping with you if you're going to act like a clown. You've got to behave yourself. Now he's going to buy all that stuff!

SELMA:

(rummages in her shoulder-bag)

Sure, sure. It was only a bit of fun. He'll sell it to somebody. People are so rich in America! And it was just for a laugh-- Cvalda!

Selma extracts a little pile of cards and a handful of hair-pins. She hands them to Kathy.

KATHY:

I won't help you with these if you're going to be such a pain.

SELMA:

(wheedling)

Oh--

KATHY:

No, I mean it. You'll just have to do your silly old hair-pins by yourself.

SELMA:

Really? Well lucky old me-- I can do just that.

She slips pins into the holes in the card at a blazing pace. Kathy watches her for a while. Then, with a sigh, she takes more cards and needles out of Selma's shoulder-bag. Slowly she starts working away.

KATHY:

I sure hope your pop appreciates all the money you send him. Or I'd feel idiotic doing all these hair pins.

SELMA:

(smiles)

Oh, he does. Don't you worry!

7. FACTORY INT/DAY.

Selma and Kathy are toiling amidst the polyrhythmic acoustic inferno. Kathy is On a similar machine further back. Now and then, Selma glances at the script in her shoulder-bag. She needs to look at it pretty closely.

She is working an enormous press that presses out stainless steel sinks. She lubricates a steel plate with soap-water, then she fits the plate into the press, which shapes it into a sink. She hands the sink to a young boy standing next to her, who cuts the edges of the sinks with a big plate-scissors. All around her people work with sinks. Now and then other workers deliver her plates and soap-water.

SELMA:

(to herself)

High on a hill was a lonely "goodhead", layee-odl,
layee odl. Leyee oo....

Selma mouths the lines again. She looks at the noisy machine inferno. The noise pulses rhythmically through the hall. She smiles and disappears into her own thoughts. Kathy looks across at her in concern.

By mistake, Selma nearly tips over the soap-water bowl, but saves it at the last minute.

Norman walks past. He looks at her admonishingly. She smiles back.

NORMAN:

You can't bring that script to work. Learn your lines
on your own time. Keep your eyes on the machine.
Last night we had to stop for five hours, because
some idiot broke one of the cutters....

SELMA:

Sure, sure--

KATHY:

If you'd quit interrupting us, Norman, it would be
less dangerous to your machines.

NORMAN:

(hesitantly)

I came to tell Selma that Bill's here--with Gene.

Selma comes back to earth. She looks livid. She leaves the machine as it presses out a new sink. Norman takes over the machine.

Selma strides out.

SELMA:

Damn it, Gene! That does it!

KATHY:

Take it easy, Selma...

Kathy runs after Selma. Norman, taking over Kathy's machine as well, yells after them.

NORMAN:

You gotta come right back, you hear?

Norman runs from machine to machine, doing both women's jobs.

8. FACTORY EXT/DAY.

A police car waits outside the factory. Bill stands beside the open car door in his cop's uniform. He watches Selma as she rushes towards the car. She hauls Gene out of the back seat. She whips his glasses off and gives him three mighty slaps. Kathy and Bill try to stop her.

SELMA:

(scolds Evzên in Czech) Can't you get it into your head that when I say you go to school you go to school!

She tears herself away from Kathy and Bill, and slaps him again.

SELMA:

You think I joke? When I say you got to study you got to study-- and not hang out with that gang of automobile thieves--

GENE:

I don't wanna go to that dumb school--

SELMA:

You'll go just as long as I say you've got to go!

KATHY:

Selma! Easy does it! That'll do!

SELMA:

No it won't-- he must go to school!

KATHY:

He'll learn what he has to in due time...

SELMA:

I'll decide that, thank you.

Gene is crying.

SELMA:

And stop crying for Christ's sake. Stop feeling so
goddamn sorry for yourself!

Jeff pulls up in his pickup. He opens the door and steps down. He looks at Selma.

JEFF:

Should I run him on over to school, Selma?

Selma turns angrily to Jeff.

SELMA:

Is it your business, all of a sudden? What're you
doing here at all? Come by to pick me up or
something?

JEFF:

(shyly)

I came by to ask if I could drive you home--

SELMA:

(angrily)

But I don't punch out for another two hours.

JEFF:

Sometimes you punch out early.

SELMA:

I *never* punch out early!

JEFF:

Well, if you don't want a ride...

SELMA:

No I damned well don't!

She turns on her heel and stalks angrily inside. They all watch her go. Bill eases Gene into the back of the police car again.

BILL:

OK, Mr. G. I'd better run you up to school...

9. FACTORY EXT/EVENING.

The factory horn sounds. Workers emerge. Selma and Kathy come out together. Jeff sidles up behind them.

JEFF:

(quietly)

If you've changed your mind, Selma, I'd be happy to run you home--

SELMA:

No thank you! I have my bicycle.

Selma gets her bike out of a storage space. A freight train passes.

KATHY:

(looks at Jeff)

She likes you, I'm sure of it.

JEFF:

You are?

10. TRAILER INT/EVENING

Selma practices tap dancing on a wooden board in the living area, to the beat of an old metronome. Gene is hunched over his supper, the open script beside him. Still putting pins into cardboard, Selma tries a fancy dance-step, but can't get it right.

SELMA:

High on a hill was a lonely "goodhead"...

GENE:

Goatherd. It's called goatherd...

SELMA:

Goatherd-- are you sure? What is a goatherd?

GENE:

Somebody who takes cares of a lot of dumb goats...

SELMA:

You seem to think everything's dumb--

GENE:

The others say you can't dance. How long do I have to read this for you?

SELMA:

You'll finish when I say so and not before. It is your punishment for not going to school. And eat up when I cook for you!

Gene prods at his supper. She looks at him affectionately.

SELMA:

Are you tired, my pet?

Gene snarls.

GENE:

Oh, cut it out, Mom, okay?

SELMA:

I just think you look tired.

Gene doesn't reply.

SELMA:

For God's sake! I was only asking.

A knock on the door. Selma answers it: Linda. She steps into the trailer.

LINDA:

You want to come over to our place and listen to some music?

SELMA:

(smiles)

It's kind of you, but there's really no need...

Linda bends down to Gene.

LINDA:

You fancy comin' down to me and Bill's place?

SELMA:

(pulling her coat on)

Don't bother to ask him. He's just cross.

11. BILL AND LINDA'S HOUSE EXT/EVENING

Selma and Gene emerge from the trailer, accompanied by Linda. Crossing Bill and Linda's garden, they head for the house. Bill waits in the doorway. Selma whispers to Gene.

SELMA:

Ask Bill about his money. Linda likes us to talk about it.

Gene looks angry.

12. BILL AND LINDA'S HOUSE INT/EVENING

Selma sits at the table, looking around Linda and Bill's home. Bill enters, carrying a gramophone, and puts on some easy listening classical music. Bill and Linda start sticking hair-pins into cards. They put the finished cards into Selma's shoulder-bag. Gene is on the couch, looking angry and bored. Linda walks up to the table with a candy tin.

SELMA:

(smiling)

You have such a beautiful home!

LINDA:

(smiles)
That's what I'm always telling Bill.

BILL:
(smiles)
Oh, it's nothing, really.

LINDA:
Sure it is. I don't reckon anybody would expect your average police officer to have a place like this!

She smiles at Bill, who looks bashful.

BILL:
Linda's great at making things look spiffy.

SELMA:
Yes, and of course, there's all that money you inherited, Bill--

Linda smiles and nods. Selma looks at her. Then at Bill.

SELMA:
Where do you keep it? In the bank?

LINDA:
In a safe deposit box. Right, Bill? Bill thinks it's for the best.

SELMA:
(smiles affably)
Oh, a safe deposit box! Good thing you don't keep it here. It wouldn't be very safe-- though it might be kind of nice, too, 'cause then you could look at it once in a while.

LINDA:
Sometimes Bill brings the box home, to check on things-- accounts and stuff-- you do, don't you, Bill? But I guess nobody'd mess with a police officer.

Bill nods and shrugs his shoulders. Selma smiles at Linda, who looks contented. Linda offers the tin round. Selma's eyes light up at the sight of the tin. She beams.

SELMA:

Salt-water taffy! Hey, I've been in America for six years, but I've never seen these before. Not in real life.

BILL:

Yeah, they're kinda pricey.

SELMA:

I once saw a movie. Back home in Czechoslovakia. Where they ate those. I thought "How wonderful it must be in the United States".

LINDA:

(smiles)

I guess it was a musical, right?

Selma smiles and nods. She eats the taffy solemnly. Gene gobbles his. Linda sits down and cards a few hair pins.

SELMA:

Thank you for helping today, Bill. You're such a kind officer!

LINDA:

Yes, and you know why, it's because he doesn't have to be one. He wouldn't work if he didn't want to. He's not in it for the money. He just plain likes helping folks.

BILL:

Well, work does a body good.

LINDA:

But I'm right? Right, Bill? You don't actually need the job?

BILL:

All right, all right-- let's just say so.

(looks at Selma, nods at Gene)

Whyn't you drop Mr. G. off here tomorrow before you go to work? Linda will make sure he gets to school on time, won't you, Linda? That way Selma will know that young Wildeye's at school and not getting himself into trouble.

LINDA:

Why, hon, that's a terrific idea--

Selma smiles as she looks around the neat, tidy home.

13. BILL AND LINDA'S HOUSE EXT/EVENING

Gene and Selma are about to return to the Trailer. Behind them, Linda re-opens the door. She holds out the taffy tin. She puts a finger to her lips.

LINDA:

(whispers)

Take the rest with you. Bill will never notice.

SELMA:

Oh, it's too much!

Linda smiles and offers the tin.

LINDA:

Oh, go on!

Linda gives Selma a kiss on the cheek and goes inside. Selma stands there for a moment, looking at the tin, dreaming.

14. TRAILER INT/NIGHT

Selma empties the last few taffies from the tin. She unwraps the wax paper from one of them, smells the taffy. She looks at it. Then she re-wraps it diligently. She wraps the remaining taffies in a piece of paper and puts them into a bag hanging on the wall.

Glancing across to Gene's room to make sure he is asleep, she steps over to a loose panel in the wall. She eases it open and retrieves a large envelope stuffed with dollar bills all neatly folded with rubber-bands around them.

She throws the envelope away and puts the money into the taffy tin instead. She looks at the tin, a smile on her lips, and replaces it behind the panel.

15. BILL AND LINDA'S HOME EXT/MORNING

Selma knocks on the door. She has Gene with her. She holds a wooden box and the bag containing the taffies. Gene shivers a bit, unused to being up so early. Linda answers the door.

SELMA:

(smiles)

It's the first of the month!

Selma hands some dollar bills to Linda. Linda accepts them without counting them.

LINDA:

You always pay right on time. Hi there, Gene.

SELMA:

Everything in its place. Now, about Gene_

LINDA:

Yes, that's right! Come on in, Gene! Don't worry, I'll get him off to school okay.

SELMA:

Thank you.

She hands Gene his bag, knowing he'll be delighted when he finds the taffies inside.

16. FACTORY LOCKER ROOM INT/MORNING

Selma wears her smock. She picks up the wooden box and walks over to Morty, who sits on a bench, changing into work clothes. She hands him the box. He opens it and peers inside. He closes it.

MORTY:

Want another?

SELMA:

Sure.

MORTY:

A big 'un or a little 'un?

SELMA:

How many's a "big 'un?"

MORTY:

A big 'un'd be 10,000.

SELMA:

I'll take a "big 'un."

Morty looks into his locker. He selects a box from among many that are there. He gives it to Selma and puts the one she has just given him on a shelf. Then he pulls out his wallet and gives her two bills, clipped to a small blue receipt. She takes them and folds them neatly.

17. FACTORY INT/DAY

Kathy and Selma are on their break. Selma cards pins, reads her script, while Kathy drinks coffee and reads a magazine. Norman enters.

NORMAN:

Can you do a couple hours' overtime again tonight,
Selma?

Selma looks up. Kathy interrupts.

KATHY:

No, she can't. Not tonight. We're going to catch a
movie.

SELMA:

Maybe we could see it tomorrow?

KATHY:

No. Tonight's musical night!

Selma smiles. She listen to the sound of the factory, and for a second or two the noise becomes music, the workers dancing a step or two.

SONG: FOREPLAY #1 TO "THE CLATTER SONG"

18. CINEMA INT/NIGHT

Kathy and Selma watch a musical. They are both utterly absorbed in it.

KATHY:

(whispers)

Now he gets to see the boss. He doesn't know that she's out back.

SELMA:

(whispers in irritation)

I'm not stupid_ just tell me what he's wearing.

KATHY:

The same as before. But this time he's got a flower in his buttonhole.

A man beside them shushes them.

KATHY:

Hey, give us a break! Just because her eye's aren't so good_

ANGRY MAN:

I paid good money to see this movie_

KATHY:

So did she.

(to Selma)

Now they're dancing_ he leads_

ANGRY MAN:

It's a goddamned musical, of course they're dancing!

Selma looks up at the screen with a smile as the music thunders out over her.

19. TRAILER INT/NIGHT

Bill, Kathy and Linda come up to the trailer door. They have sly smiles on their faces. Selma opens the door.

SELMA:

Hello?

LINDA:

Hi, Selma....

Selma looks suspicious. They come in and sit down. Gene looks out from his room, curious.

SELMA:

(looks at Kathy)

You've come to tell me something?

KATHY:

(pretending not to care)

No....no....

BILL:

Selma.....

SELMA:

Yes?

BILL:

It's about the bike...

Selma gets up. Now she understands. She shakes her head.

SELMA:

No bike! When I was a child I walked. Gene can walk.

BILL:

But he says he could make it to school in time on his own if he had a bike....

SELMA:

(angry now)

So that's what he says?
(turns to Gene)
You asked them to come here?

GENE:

No!

SELMA:

Well you can all save your trouble.... I will not buy
Gene a bike.

GENE:

I'm almost the only kid in my class who doesn't have
a bike. One boy even got a scooter!

SELMA:

You know very well I don't have any money. Every
time I make ten bucks I send them to grand-dad and
the folks back home. The money does more good
there.

GENE:

Grand-dad!

KATHY:

But Selma_

SELMA:

(angrily)

No, he's got to get it into his head-- And all of you
for that matter--I will not spend the money on
expensive presents for him-- And not even when its
his birthday... that's the kind of mom he has for
himself. I'm sure he'd rather have another--

KATHY:

(to Gene, smiles)

Your mother is only teasing. Look what she has
brought for you.

She looks conspiratorial. She points through the window. Gene looks. Selma doesn't understand. Jeff appears outside, pulling a bike. He displays it.

GENE:
(looks at Selma)

A bike!

SELMA:
It is not from me, and you all know it!
(turns to the others)
We can't accept.

KATHY:
It's second-hand. Bill picked it up at work-- Jeff
fixed it up-- it isn't worth that many of your precious
dollars.

SELMA:
Thank you very much, but in my family *we* buy what
we need.

GENE:
Oh, Mom!

KATHY:
Well, there's nowhere for us to take it back to. And
even if it costs us our friendship, Gene is going to
have that bicycle. Just like all the other kids.

Selma is about to speak. But then she looks at Gene, who looks beseechingly at her. Kathy looks firmly at Selma. Selma reconsiders. She gives in.

SELMA:
If you promise to go to school— and get there on
time—and do all your assignments and read at least
one book for every time you ride your bike-- I
suppose we'll be able to pay for it one day--

GENE:
(happy)

I promise!

Selma smiles reluctantly. The others are also smiling now. Linda brings in some fruit juice and Jeff brings in the bike. He shows it off to Gene.

JEFF:

It's not exactly a scooter...

BILL:

(cheerfully)

Maybe it is...Mr. G.

Bill shows them the bit of wood he's wedged into the front wheel; when Gene rides the bike, it sounds like a scooter. Gene rides noisily out the door and round and round the trailer. He is delighted. Selma watches him through the window, smiling.

20. TRAILER INT/NIGHT

Selma watches Gene sleep. His glasses rest on the bedside table, his new bike leans against his bed. Selma exits, closes the door behind her. She tidies up a bit and starts carding. She also starts the metronome. She smiles as she listens. There is a soft knock at the door. She answers it. It is Bill. He looks a bit distracted.

SELMA:

Bill_ something up?

BILL:

No, no, I couldn't sleep, that's all.

Selma stops the metronome and pours him a cup of coffee. He sits there for a long time without a word. She looks at him, and he starts to cry. She takes his hand gravely.

BILL:

Can I tell you, Selma?

SELMA:

Yes, you can.

BILL:

I have no money.

He looks at her desperately.

BILL:

The money I inherited is long since gone. Linda spends and spends and-- well, my salary is nowhere near enough. I can't say no to her. And now they are going to repossess the house because I can't keep up the payments. Linda will never get over it_ I know she won't_ I know she won't_

He cries a little. She looks at him sympathetically. He pulls himself together.

BILL:

I'm glad I've told someone. I feel much better now. And I know I can trust you not to breathe a word to anyone.

She nods. His hand shakes as he drinks some more of the coffee. He looks at her.

BILL:

Now you know my secret, Selma.

Selma nods. Her gaze grows distant. There is a moment's silence. She looks at him.

SELMA:

I also have a secret that nobody knows.

Bill looks at her quietly.

SELMA:

I am going blind. I'm not blind yet, but soon, maybe even sometime this year_

She smiles to herself. She looks at Bill, who is aghast.

SELMA:

Oh, it's not as bad as it sounds_ I've always known it would happen. It's a family thing. That's why I came to America. Because in America they can give Gene an operation.

She sits there a moment.

SELMA:

He will have his operation when he is eleven. They told me not to tell him beforehand. That can make it worse. I almost have the money now.

BILL:

So you made up that story about sending money to your dad?

SELMA:

(shakes her head)

I never knew my dad.

BILL:

That's why you put in all those hours. You've been saving up to pay for Gene's operation?

SELMA:

Well, it's my fault.

BILL:

How come?

SELMA:

I knew he would have the same bad eyes as me, but I had him all the same.

Bill looks at her. She is quite relaxed, and she nods a little to herself.

SELMA:

But now I have saved up almost enough money. I must hurry and get the rest before my own eyes go.

Bill looks at her sympathetically.

BILL:

You are strong, Selma. Very strong!

Selma shakes her head.

SELMA:

When I hear the machines at the factory I can't stop myself from dreaming that it is music-- I don't need an orchestra, just a few noises, and then, the music comes.
(switches on metronome and dreams a little)
It's the kind of thing that worsens when you can't see very well--

Bill looks at her, listening. Selma giggles.

SELMA:

I just hate it when the songs in the movies get real big, with whole crowds of people and stuff, and the camera goes through the roof--Because then it's the last song, and that will be that. When I was a child I always left after the next to last song... so it never stopped...

They sit there awhile.

BILL:

Thanks for telling me your secret. Now we know something about each other. I'm sure you'll fix Gene up. Maybe they'll even fix you up, too.

SELMA:

(smiles)

Oh, I doubt it--

Bill gets up to go. Selma opens the door for him.

SELMA:

Bill!

He turns around at the foot of the short steps.

SELMA:

I'm sure you'll puzzle out how to keep your home.

BILL:

Yeah, I guess I just might. Goodnight, Selma.

SELMA:

Goodnight, Bill.

Bill walks off. Then he turns around.

BILL:

Selma, mum's the word, right?

SELMA:

Mum?

BILL:

We don't tell anybody...

SELMA:

Right, Bill-- I promise--

She stands there a while and watches him go before she closes her door. Bill heads towards his house. From behind a curtain Linda watches him. As he approaches, she moves away so as not to be spotted.

21. TRAILER EXT/MORNING

Selma gets out her bike. She pushes it towards the street, but, squinting out at the morning traffic, she's overtaken by doubt. She puts it back. Behind the house a train passes. She watches it.

22. FACTORY INT/DAY

Norman, Selma and Kathy are on their break. They sip coffee as they card pins.

NORMAN:

What's his name, anyhow?

SELMA:

Whose?

NORMAN:

Your old man-- isn't he the one we're carding all these everlovin' pins for?

KATHY:

His name is Oldrich Nov_ and he lives just outside Prague, on a big lake.

NORMAN:

But you are not called Nov_ Selma_

SELMA:

(brushes it off, somewhat discomforted)
Hey, you needn't do any more if you don't want, I
can manage on my own.

NORMAN:

(with irony)

I thought commies made a big deal out of sharing
everything_

SELMA:

They do, and it's a fine thing_ they're just poor.

NORMAN:

What are you doing here then, if you think
Czechoslovakia is so much better than the US of A?

SELMA:

(defiantly)

Maybe Czechoslovakia is better for people_

Selma gets up. She puts the finished card into her shoulder-bag and heads for the door. She
turns with a smile.

SELMA:

But the doctors are better in the US of A!

Norman watches her return to her machine. She takes over from the person who has been
standing in for her. After a while she starts gazing dreamily across the machines. Their rhythm
is massive now. She gazes at all the moving parts. Slowly the rhythm turns into music.

SONG: FOREPLAY II TO "THE CLATTER SONG"

Selma smiles and closes her eyes. For an instant she and the other workers dance beautiful
tap-steps to the music. One of the workers dances up, a flower in his buttonhole, and gives it
to her.

23. FACTORY INT/DAY

Norman and Kathy still sit at the table. Kathy still cards hair pins. Norman looks at her. She
looks up at him.

KATHY:

Just be grateful you don't live in Czechoslovakia.
There are people starving there.

NORMAN:

There are people starving here!

KATHY:

Not if they're prepared to roll up their sleeves!

NORMAN:

Maybe.

He gets up and goes into the other hall. Kathy finishes the card and pops it into Selma's shoulder-bag. As she does so, she finds the folded chart. She gets it out, unfolds it. Kathy looks at the letters and numbers in shock. Shaking her head, she looks out at Selma, who is dreaming away at her machine.

She sees that Selma is carelessly about to put two plates at once into the machine. She runs towards her.

24. FACTORY INT/DAY

Kathy comes up to Selma's machine and stops her from putting the two plates into the machine. Selma wakes up and quickly gets the second plate out of the way. But Norman's not fooled. He shakes his head.

NORMAN:

You know what happens if you put two plates
in...don't you?

KATHY:

Yes, yes...but she didn't....

NORMAN

You destroy the cliché... it takes a whole day to
mend it. Never two plates, Selma... Never!!!

KATHY:

(with assumed jocularly)

Sure, sure, Norman-- just take it easy, okay?

Norman leaves, still serious. Kathy gives Selma an angry look and goes to her own machine. Selma goes on working.

25. FACTORY EXT/EVENING

Selma and Kathy emerge from the mill. Kathy is angry.

KATHY:

You cheated the doctor! You shouldn't be working at the press at all! How dare you! Just how much *can* you see?

SELMA:

Oh stop it! I could work it with my eyes closed. You could too. Just because I can't see those dumb letters doesn't mean I can't do my work. It was only because I started dreaming.

KATHY:

Dreaming! About what?

SELMA:

That there was music and we were all dancing_ don't you hear the music the machines make?

KATHY:

No, but then I'm not a real American. Not the way you are.

SELMA:

(astonished)

Am I a real American?

KATHY:

(nods)

That's *exactly* what you are. You dream like an American, but I don't. I know that a machine is a machine, and when it makes a noise it is not making

music or tap-dancing its way through a movie. When it makes a noise, it's to keep you awake and on your toes. Because it's not just that you can break the machine, but also, it can cut off your hands just like that... You have to watch out every second. Promise me you'll stay awake, okay?

SELMA:

(smiles)

Yes, I promise to stay awake!

KATHY:

(looks at her earnestly)

You've got to listen to what I'm saying, Selma. Seriously.

SELMA:

I know it, I know it. I promise I won't dream any more. I'll keep my eyes open.

KATHY:

Good!

Kathy leaves. Jeff walks up to Selma. They watch Kathy go.

JEFF:

If you're not going with Kathy, can I give you a lift home?

SELMA:

No, I don't want a boyfriend, I've told you that... You're a nice guy Jeff, but I don't have time for a boyfriend. Not right now.

JEFF:

All I'm asking is drive you on home. I can throw your bike in back.

SELMA:

If I wanted a boyfriend it would be you, that's for

sure. But I don't want one. Not now.

Selma picks up her bike. He puts his hand on it.

JEFF:

You know, it's not really safe for you to ride that bike, what with you— er-- wearin' glasses and all.

SELMA:

(pulling out into the street)

No need for you to worry.

Just as she speaks she almost cycles into a huge truck. It brakes and sounds its horn. She shakes her fist at it, but remains rooted to the spot, trembling, as the truck drives off.

SELMA:

(noticing Jeff watching her, shouts)

No need for you to distract me like that, either.

Jeff looks down. He crosses to his pick-up and drives off. Selma watches him go. Now Bill comes by in his police car. He gives Selma a wave.

26. POLICE CAR INT/DAY

Selma is in the car, which idles near a small yard near the tracks. The bike pokes out of the trunk. Selma looks sympathetically at Bill.

SELMA:

How did it go today?

Bill doesn't reply. He looks at her, then looks away again.

BILL:

If I could make the next payment I'd have a bit more time...

SELMA:

(consolatory)

Yes, and then you'd figure a way out for sure...

Bill turns and looks her in the eye.

BILL:

All I need is a loan, just for a month or so--

Selma understands what he's driving at. She sits there awkwardly. Gazing through the windshield, she shakes her head.

SELMA:

I can't do that, Bill. I'm sorry--

BILL:

(beseeching)

Just for a month. After all, Gene has no idea you've been saving up. And in a month, he won't even be eleven yet... Linda had nothing when she was a kid-- that's why our home means so much to her--

SELMA:

No, Bill. I can't. That money belongs to Gene. I don't dare lend it to you... I promise him the operation every single night after he falls asleep. No, Bill, it's impossible.

Bill sits awhile in silence. He has humiliated himself by asking. For a second we can see he is hurt. He smiles apologetically.

BILL:

I should never have asked--

SELMA:

Hey, of course you should. No harm in asking. I just can't do it, that's all--

BILL:

How can I allow myself to ask such a thing? How dumb can a guy get? It's unforgivable.

SELMA:

(pleading)

Bill! I'm just as sorry as you are, but I don't dare do anything right now. I won't be able to keep my job much longer, the way things are—I still haven't got all the money I need, and my eyes are going fast-- I can't even ride my bike home any more.

BILL:

(hardly hears her)

I'm sure things'll work out for both of us, Selma. I'm just under so much pressure. I guess I could try talking to the Savings and Loan again. Linda wants new couches--

Bill starts the car again. He turns to Selma.

BILL:

(with a crooked smile)

I can always shoot myself. That'd probably be the easiest--

SELMA:

Bill! You mustn't say things like that!

BILL:

No, no. Just kidding.

Bill pulls out onto the road.

27. TRAILER INT/ EARLY MORNING

Selma lies awake in bed. She hears a door open down at the house. She looks into the garden. Bill walks towards the mobile home. He stands there awhile, unable to make up his mind whether or not to come in. He turns and goes back inside his house. He does not spot Selma. She lies down again. Back at the house Linda also steps away from the window. Selma is still lying there, awake, gazing at the ceiling, when her alarm clock goes off.

28. BILL AND LINDA'S HOME INT/MORNING

Selma drops Gene off at Linda's. Bill is there, too. He avoids Selma's eye.

SELMA:

Can I pay you something for minding Gene and taking him to school? After all, you are not obligated to do it. And maybe the rent I pay you is way too low, with the way everything else keeps going up--

LINDA:

No, Selma, you keep your money. You need it more than we do.

Selma looks at Bill, who lowers his gaze. Linda hands him his lunch tin and thermos. He emerges from the study, carrying his service pistol. He is in uniform, but without his belt. He hurries out. Linda looks at him coldly as he goes.

Selma glances outside. She sees Bill pick up his belt from inside the car and put it on. He pushes the gun into its holster. He comes back in and goes to his room.

SELMA:

Does he bring his gun into your home?

LINDA:

Why of course he does, Selma. He's a police officer. He *has* to bring it home. But he keeps it locked up in his desk drawer, no need to fret.

SELMA:

(apologizing for her ignorance)

I just had no idea he kept it at home.

Selma gives Gene a kiss and his bag; he shies away; she leaves.

29. TRAILER EXT/MORNING

Selma gets on her bike. The wooden box of pins is on the luggage rack. She is about to set off, but suddenly her courage fails her. She looks up at the railroad line. A train is passing. She takes the box off the rack.

30. FACTORY INT/DAY

Selma daydreams, gazing across the machinery as she works. Her mind is far away. Selma pulls herself together and wakes up. She notices that Kathy is monitoring her from her own machine. Selma nods at her reassuringly.

31. FACTORY LOCKER ROOM INT/DAY

Selma lugs two wooden boxes into the locker room. Kathy is getting changed. She looks up at her.

KATHY:

Since when did you decide to do two at once?

SELMA:

Thought I might as well. Don't worry, I'll card

them.

Kathy shakes her head. Norman pokes his head in.

NORMAN:

10 o'clock then, Selma.

Selma nods awkwardly. Norman leaves.

KATHY:

Ten o'clock? What's this?

SELMA:

Norman got me onto the night shift tonight.

KATHY:

The night shift? You're crazy. You can hardly see well enough to work your own shift!

SELMA:

I need the money, Kathy.

KATHY:

If your father knew what you were going through for his sake-- No, you can't do it, Selma. You've already done a full shift. I'm telling Norman it's downright irresponsible.

SELMA:

You always take things so badly. If you don't take things badly you can do a whole load more than you think you can. Tonight suits me fine. It's just after drama club.

KATHY:

And you're going to that, too! You're nuts. You shoulda dropped out weeks ago. I've sure had it up to my ears with that ridiculous show.

SELMA:

But it gives me so much strength afterwards, Kathy. I've noticed that. I know it's only for fun, and that some of the others laugh at me, but in a way that show is what keeps everything together.

Kathy looks at her. Then she suddenly gets to her feet.

KATHY:

(angrily)

No, I've had my fill of you, Selma. Do what you want. Do the night shift, go ahead, break your neck. Don't even for a second think I'm coming to your rescue!

Kathy puts on her coat and stalks out.

32. FACTORY EXT/EVENING

Selma exits. The factory horn sounds. She carries her two boxes. She looks around. Jeff is waiting beside his pick-up.

JEFF:

Kathy split already.

SELMA:

I know it. She wasn't who I was looking for.

JEFF:

Oh? Who were you looking for?

SELMA:

You. I was going to ask if you felt like giving me a ride. I'm without my bike today.

Jeff looks suspicious.

SELMA:

(smiles)

Well, what do you say? A lift would be lovely. I am going to drama rehearsal. You mind?

JEFF:

(looks down)

That's why I'm here. I want to look after you, you know. Where's your bike, anyway? You always ride your bike.

He takes the boxes.

SELMA:

(heading for his pick-up)

I figured it was quicker to walk.

JEFF:

How'd you reckon that?

SELMA:

I walked along the railroad tracks.

Jeff glances up towards the railroad. He gets into the pick-up. There is a withered old bouquet inside.

JEFF:

Maybe you want the flowers too? I guess I'll have to buy some new ones.

SELMA:

(smiles)

No, thanks. I don't want flowers and I don't want to be looked after. I just want a ride so I can rehearse my musical

JEFF:

(starts the car)

I like you, Selma, but I don't like musicals... I think they are fake... I don't suddenly start singing and dancing...

SELMA:

(smiles)

No, Jeff... you are right... you don't.

33. REHEARSAL ROOMS INT/DAY

A dozen people are seated in the rehearsal room, Samuel and Boris among them. The whole cast is assembled. Samuel steps on stage with Selma. Jeff sits down at the back of the room. He looks up at her.

SAMUEL:

We agree to get everyone together *after* you clock out and now you say Kathy isn't coming after all? Jeez, what a mess.

SELMA:

She'll come next time. She's is completely hooked.

SAMUEL:

Sure she is. We'll just have to make do. Let's introduce you to the rest of the cast. And your understudy, too.

SELMA:

My understudy?

SAMUEL:

Sure, you always have two in case one gets sick. A girl Boris knows. Suzan. She's a good dancer -- but she doesn't have an ounce of your charisma.

Selma looks at Suzan, the gorgeous girl sitting next to Boris. Samuel leads Suzan and Selma center stage.

SAMUEL:

Well, guys, here are our two Marias. You'll be seeing both of them at Sunday's rehearsal. As you can see, Selma wears glasses, but as Maria, she'll probably be best off without them.

Samuel looks at Selma. She gets the idea: she has to take off her glasses. She lets everyone see her without glasses. She blinks shyly. Then she puts them on again.

SAMUEL:

I'm really pleased with Selma's Maria. Without the glasses, it's *perfect*.

Selma is still adjusting her eyes after putting her glasses back on.

34. FACTORY INT/NIGHT

A woman shows Selma what to do.

WOMAN:

We are fewer at night, so you gotta get your own material... and you also have to do your own cutting. You just use the moment when the machine is pressing to do the cutting... and you can't stop the press—or else then there's nothing for Henry to do... that's why it's better paid at night...

Selma nods. She looks at Henry at the next machine.

SELMA:

Is there less light than in the daytime?

WOMAN:

It's exactly the same, you'll see.

She goes off, leaving Selma on her own among the noisy machines. Selma does her very best. But things soon start going wrong.

Selma can't keep up when she has to cut the sinks with the machine scissors, and it is hard for her to see. Too often, Henry has nothing to do, and too often, Selma's machine stands still. The woman looks at Selma.

WOMAN:

You have to feed Henry.... Your machine has to run all the time...

Selma does her best. It goes better... but, rushing to fetch the plates, she drops them on the floor. As she picks them up, her machine stops. Selma shakes her head. But then it starts again. Selma turns around... It's Kathy who stands by her machine.

SELMA:

Kathy! What are you doing here?

KATHY:

What do you think? I've worked the night shift before. You have to run double fast. It takes a little while to get used to, when you must cut also.

Selma smiles at Kathy, who helps Selma get the plates and cuts for her now and then. As they toil away, Norman comes by. He is putting on his coat, ready to go home.

NORMAN:

Kathy? I didn't put you down for the night shift.

KATHY:

Run along, Norman. I'm on my own time now. How I spend it is my business. And I want to spend it with Selma.

Norman smiles and leaves.

NORMAN:

Night night!

SELMA:

Good night, Norman.

She gives him a smile. Then she looks at Kathy, who smiles briefly.

35. FACTORY INT/NIGHT

Selma works the row on her own. Kathy perches on a chair, watching her. She glances down the second row.

KATHY:

Get more plates in one go... then you will make it....

SELMA:

Yes, I know it, I'm on my way-- go home, Kathy. You can go on home now. You got to get up in the morning. Thanks for helping me, though.

KATHY:

You're not getting off that easy. I'll just sit here and keep an eye out for you.

SELMA:

You really don't have to. I can see perfectly well now. It's just sometimes, when I get very tired-- it gets so dark. Honest, you can go home now, no worry.

KATHY:

(angrily)

Selma, I'm not going to argue with you.

SELMA:

(with a little smile)

Okay, stay then-- please yourself-- Cvalda!

Kathy glowers angrily at Selma but doesn't say a word. Selma concentrates.

36. FACTORY INT/NIGHT

Selma works, busy, but tired. Kathy has dropped off to sleep in her chair. Selma looks at her affectionately. A worker at the other end of the hall starts a machine. It emits another rhythmic beat into the hall. Selma tries not to be distracted. But the music starts.

SONG: "THE CLATTER SONG"

Selma is dancing around with the plates for the machine. Gracefully, she puts two plates into the press and starts it. Suddenly there is a big noise.

Kathy wakes up as the machine is cracking. Everybody runs to the machine. Selma is desperately trying to get the plates out. She cuts her hands trying.

37. FACTORY EXT/NIGHT

Selma and Kathy step out into the streetlight's glare. Selma shivers in the cold. Kathy peers around. Jeff waits in the pick-up.

KATHY:

(to Jeff with feigned jocularly)

Do you live here? Did you know she was working tonight? If not, you sure got here early!

Jeff shrugs his shoulders.

JEFF:

Sure, I knew. When it's this late she might say yes to a ride, who knows!

Selma smiles.

SELMA

It'd be better if you took Kathy home; she has to get

up in a few hours...

Jeff looks at her bloody hand.

JEFF:

You cut your hand--

SELMA:

Yes, they are sharp machines.

Selma hugs Kathy.

SELMA:

I'll walk. I could do with a bit of fresh air--

She smiles and makes her way up the slope to the railroad tracks. She turns and smiles to Kathy.

SELMA:

Thanks for helping me, Kathy.

Kathy waves. Jeff gets in, starts the engine. Kathy watches Selma, who makes her way along the track. She can't stay on course for long without discreetly finding the rail with her foot, and using it to guide her. Kathy notices and understands Selma's little ploy. Kathy is profoundly affected. She weeps a little. Jeff reaches over and opens the pick-up door for her. She wipes her eyes and smiles to him.

KATHY:

It's nothing. Thanks, I sure appreciate the ride.

She gets in. They set off.

38. RAILROAD TRACK BEHIND BILL AND LINDA'S HOUSE EXT/NIGHT

Selma walks down the tracks all alone. She advances purposefully in the early morning light. She walks onto a bridge. She senses this, and turns around. She walks back a bit, and fumbles her way down the embankment, through the fence, and into the garden where her trailer stands.

39. BILL AND LINDA'S HOUSE EXT/NIGHT.

Selma knocks at the door gently. Bill answers it. He puts a finger to his lips, then goes back inside for Gene, who is asleep. Bill carries him carefully towards the trailer.

SELMA:

(whispers)
Thank you for looking after Mr. G.

BILL:
No problem. Jeff drove your hair pins over in his
pick-up; I left them on the table.

SELMA:
Thanks so much.

They go quietly into the trailer.

40. TRAILER INT/NIGHT

Gently, Bill puts Gene into bed. Selma loosens Gene's clothes and puts a blanket over him. They close the door quietly behind them. They go into the living area. Selma sits down wearily at the table. She pushes the two boxes to one side, rests her head on the table. She closes her eyes for a moment.

SELMA:
My eyes are crazy tonight.

Bill stands there self-consciously.

BILL:
I think I've found a solution to my problem, Selma.

SELMA:
(brightens)
Oh, Bill, how happy that makes me!

BILL:
Hey, it's nothing special. But I've made up my mind.
I'm going to tell Linda. After all, she loves me. We'll
grapple with this thing together.

SELMA:
(nods)
That's a good idea. It really is.

BILL:

I mean, it's only money.

Selma sits there a moment, smiling. She is almost nodding off. Bill notices.

BILL:

I'm sorry, I'll let you get to bed.

SELMA:

Yes, I guess I'm a bit tired.

Bill goes to the door. Then he turns and looks at Selma.

BILL:

Good night, Selma.

SELMA:

(rubbing her eyes)

Good night, Bill. And thank you.

Bill opens the door. But he does not leave. He looks at Selma. Then he closes the door with a bang. He withdraws into the semi-darkness behind the door. Selma sits for a while, and then gets up, goes to the door, and locks it. Bill holds his breath. She is very close to him now, but she doesn't see him. She sits down at the table again. She fumbles in her bag and pulls out some dollar bills clipped to the receipt she got for the hair pins. She removes the receipt and folds the bills. Then she crosses to the loose panel and extracts the tin. She puts the money into it. She looks around as if she senses somebody's presence, but calms down again, and replaces the tin behind the panel. Bill holds his breath in the corner.

41. CINEMA INT/EVENING

Kathy and Selma watch a musical. Kathy mostly looks sadly at Selma. Selma mostly listens.

SELMA:

What's he doing now?

The angry man from last time is sitting behind them again.

ANGRY MAN:

Shhhh!

KATHY:

(leans close to Selma and whispers)
He's dancing.

She takes Selma's hand. With two fingers she does the dance on Selma's palm, imitating the steps she sees on the screen. The dancer is Fred Astaire. He does a nifty slide. Kathy does one, too. Selma giggles, impressed. Kathy weeps as her fingers dance on.

42. CINEMA EXT/EVENING

Kathy and Selma emerge from the cinema. Kathy holds Selma by the hand. Selma stops.

SELMA:

I know you don't like it, but I am going to drama now. You think I should drop it, but my eyes are actually better lately.

KATHY:

(looks at her tenderly)

I don't think anything—Listen, we'll both go.

SELMA:

(happily surprised)

I thought you'd had enough?

KATHY:

I'll give it one last chance.

Kathy leads Selma away. Selma squeezes her hand.

SELMA:

I *can* play that part. I know I can. My heart says so...
(she smiles)

Anyway it says that it would have been a pity to learn all the words otherwise...

43. REHEARSAL ROOM INT/NIGHT

Selma stands without her glasses, next to Kathy, who waits just off-stage. Boris is at the front of the stage. The seven kids playing his children stand in the background. The music leads up to Selma's entrance.

SAMUEL:

--And!

Selma is rooted to the spot. Kathy looks at her. Selma clutches Kathy's hand.

KATHY:

You're on.

SELMA:

(whispers hesitantly)

It really is darker tonight.

(dons glasses, peers through them briefly)

I can't even see him. I hope there'll be more light
when we do the actual show--

KATHY:

He's at the front of the stage. On the other side.

SELMA:

How far would you say it was?

Kathy shakes her head quietly and looks sympathetically at Selma. Boris looks at them in confusion.

SAMUEL:

(from the auditorium)

Enter Selma! Again, please.

The piano tries again. The music leads up to Selma's entrance. Some time passes. Kathy appears on stage, crosses the gap from the wings to Boris in measured steps.

SAMUEL:

No, no-- Selma comes on now! Can't you hear?

KATHY:

(smiles apologetically)

Oh, sorry!

Kathy exits, returning to Selma. Samuel sighs.

SAMUEL:

Try again!

KATHY:

(whispers)

Six big steps and one little one. And you'll be there.

Selma nods. Kathy guides her in the right direction with a gentle push. Selma walks slowly towards Boris. Kathy hardly dares to watch. Selma takes six big steps and one little one. She ends up more or less in the right spot.

SAMUEL:

That was good. Perfect timing. Now you show Von Trapp whatever you've been rehearsing with the children. Do you want to suggest something?

Selma stands motionless, peering into the auditorium. A long silence. She doesn't move.

SAMUEL:

Or maybe you don't want to suggest anything?

Selma takes a deep breath.

SELMA:

Samuel, I want to talk to you. Outside.

SAMUEL:

(surprised)

Sure, Selma, but if it's about the drums, let me tell you, I've been looking everywhere-- you'll get your drums, don't worry!

SELMA:

It's not that--

SAMUEL:

No? All right, hey, of course we can go outside for a chat-- of course we can--

(to Boris as he exits)

Rehearse a bit with Suzan while I'm gone.

Kathy appears. She takes Selma by the arm. Suzan gets ready.

44. CORRIDOR INT/NIGHT

Selma waits for Samuel. He walks up to her.

SAMUEL:

Okay, Selma. What's wrong?

SELMA:

I am thinking maybe I shouldn't play Maria, after all. I'm much too old-- and maybe it doesn't matter so much to me after all-- the show I mean-- matter enough for me to take it seriously enough. After all, it's a lot of work.

SAMUEL:

It sure is--

SELMA:

And Suzan is such a good dancer, I think-- much better than me-- isn't there another part I could play? A smaller part?

SAMUEL:

(scrutinizes her)

Everyone's been cast. Well, apart from the old nun who lets Maria out of the convent gate-- you can have her part, but she doesn't do any dancing.

SELMA:

(disappointed)

Oh...

SAMUEL:

(registering her disappointment)

But maybe she could.

SELMA:

(smiles freshly)

Taps?

SAMUEL:

I told you there is no tapping in "Sound of Music."

He looks at her a little while. Then he softens up:

SAMUEL:

Ok, Selma...you can do a few slaptaps. But very

small, Selma. Almost as if it wasn't taps....

He shows her some very, very soft steps.

SELMA:

(smiles)

OK, Samuel! I'd like that. I'd be in the show after all.

SAMUEL:

(smiles and nods)

And it'd make sense for the nun to wear glasses, with her being so old and all.

Selma smiles at him.

SELMA:

Thank you, Samuel. You're not angry with me, are you?

SAMUEL:

Of course not, Selma.

Samuel looks across at the other members of the cast.

SAMUEL:

But it means you won't be on tonight. We're not doing the convent today.

SELMA:

That's fine. I'll just watch for a bit.

(Takes Samuel by the arm, earnestly)

Thank you, Samuel-- thank you for letting me stay in the show. It means an awful lot to me.

SAMUEL:

Sure, Selma. Few people deserve to be included as much as you do--

45. REHEARSAL ROOM INT/NIGHT

Selma and Kathy sit in the auditorium, watching the others rehearse. Samuel, closer to the

front, talks to some of the cast-members. They glance over at Selma. On stage, Suzan and Boris dance. Selma smiles at the sound. Kathy looks at her with mercy. Then she gives her a little squeeze.

46. FACTORY INT/DAY

Selma tends her machine; Kathy glances at her. She waves. Selma sees her wave, smiles, and waves back. Selma is working well. She is concentrating hard. Norman enters. He looks at Selma. Then he comes up to her.

NORMAN:

(cheerfully)

Where are all the hair-pins today? I'm ashamed of myself, going on my break and not poking pins into cards for old Oldrich!

SELMA:

They're at home. I only card them at home in the evenings now. So I don't get everything mixed up. The folks back home will just have to wait a bit longer for their money. If you do too much at once you end up doing it all badly. And so I won't be working nights any more, either.

KATHY:

And she's dropped Maria, too.

NORMAN:

(with uncertain joviality)

Well, well, well. What you reckon I'm gonna do if I can't bawl you out for learning your lines on company time?

Selma smiles as she works. Norman fidgets. He can't get himself to leave. Kathy looks at him, worried. He gives her a look.

SELMA:

(cheerfully)

Hey, shoo now. Let us get some work done!

Norman pulls himself together.

NORMAN:

(seriously)

I want a word, Selma, alright? In my office.

Selma looks up.

SELMA:

Can it wait 'till lunch?

NORMAN:

No, 'fraid not.

47. FACTORY SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE INT/DAY

Selma is seated. She peers around the office. Norman sits at his desk.

NORMAN:

(suffering)

I hate saying this, but we were down for a day when the machine broke....

SELMA:

I can do my job just fine as long as I stick to the day shift, and keep my mind on it. I promise I can-- it won't happen again.

Norman begins to protest. Selma cuts him off.

SELMA:

I promise, Norman. I mean, I know you're the one who gets the blame. I just have to quit dreaming so much-- I forgot, but from now on I'll remember--

NORMAN:

(shakes his head)

I've been ordered to let you go, Selma--

SELMA:

Let me go?

NORMAN:

It's not your first mistake, we all know that. They

won't take any more chances-- It's out of my hands.

SELMA:

(frowns and thinks)

You mean I have to just--get up and go?

NORMAN:

(intensely miserable)

Yes, Selma. But you won't have to pay for the damaged machine, I did get them to agree to that--

Norman pushes an envelope with Selma's wages across the desk. Selma is shaken. She looks into the hall. She looks at Norman.

SELMA:

(quietly)

Thanks, Norman.

NORMAN:

I don't know what to say--

SELMA:

You don't have to say anything-- you've always been kind to me. You are a good man to work for. I like you very much

Norman looks at her and shakes his head. Selma gets up and picks up the envelope.

SELMA:

Goodbye, Norman.

NORMAN:

Goodbye, Selma.

Selma turns and opens the door into the factory

NORMAN:

Maybe I could find you something away from the machines where your eyesight wouldn't matter so much-- not right away, but--

SELMA:
(on her way out)
Sure— thank you, Norman.

48. FACTORY INT/DAY

Selma, changed into her day clothes, walks through the factory towards the exit. Several workers watch her go. She smiles at them. They acknowledge her smiles. Selma stops next to a row of machines by the window.

SELMA:
(asking into space)
Is Morty at his machine?

Morty appears from farther down the row.

MORTY:
Right here, Selma.

He comes up to her. He is grave.

SELMA:
I have two boxes back home. But I'm not finished with them. Can I return them and still get my deposit back?

MORTY:
We'll figure something out, Selma. Sure we will.

SELMA:
Because I've got to scrape together all I can, and just hope it'll be enough.

She nods to herself and heads for the exit. Norman is talking to Kathy. Kathy angers. She runs after Selma.

KATHY:
They can't do this! You've never done any damage 'till now. They got no right! If you go, I go.

Kathy turns to Norman, who has come after her.

KATHY:

I'm going, too, Norman. I'm sure you can find a whole new crew of folks who can mind your goddamned machines for you.

Selma turns to Kathy.

SELMA:

Don't argue, please don't. You're always yelling at each other. It doesn't sound nice and it's time somebody told you. Excuse me, but I've got to go.

Kathy looks at Selma. She is distraught.

KATHY:

How will you get by?

(looks at Norman furiously)

What is she going to do now? Did you even bother to think of that?

SELMA:

No need to worry about me. If there ever is, I'll let you know.

Selma gives Kathy a hug.

SELMA:

See you around!

Selma nods to Norman again and goes out. Kathy watches her go.

49. FACTORY PARKING LOT EXT/DAY

Selma emerges out onto the parking lot. She looks around. Someone is watching from a doorway.

SELMA:

Has anyone seen Jeff today?

PERSON IN DOORWAY:

He usually gets here early, Selma; but not *this* early.

SELMA:

(snorts)

If he'd been here today, I'd have let him drive me home.

She follows the fence to the embankment and sets off along the railroad tracks.

SELMA:
(to herself)
I could have done with a ride today.

50. RAILROAD TRACKS EXT/DAY

Selma walks along the tracks, her foot against the rail. Jeff appears far behind her, running hard. He catches up, out of breath.

JEFF:
I just spotted you! I can give you a lift if you like...

SELMA:
(smiles)
That's nice. Later on. Can you come by later on? I could use a "lift" then.

JEFF:
Right.

He walks on with her. She stops and turns towards him. She smiles.

SELMA:
Not now!

JEFF:
No, sure-- I was just--

SELMA:
(smiles)
And you'll need your truck if you're going to give me a lift, won't you?

Jeff nods.

SELMA:
Come by my place about threeish. I've got something

I need to do then.

Jeff nods and leaves reluctantly. Selma stands there and listens. There is utter silence. She looks up again to see where Jeff is.

SELMA:

(shouts)

Get off the track, Jeff! There is a train!

Jeff stands there a moment; he can't hear a thing. Then in the distance a freight train can be heard. He steps aside. Selma goes a little way down the embankment, too. The train passes. It is endless, a timber and freight train. It moves infinitely slowly.

As the train passes by, Jeff notices that Selma seems to be in doubt of where to look for him. As she can't hear him in the noise. He throws a little rock that lands close to her. She looks in the direction and speaks:

SELMA:

(with a smile)

Get on your way then!

JEFF:

You don't see, do you?

Selma turns toward his voice, surprised to hear where he really is. She's unhappy to have been fooled by his trick.

SELMA:

What is there to see?

Selma stands motionless as the train rumbles by. Now she hears the rhythm of the wheels as they cross a gap in the rails. The slow beat persists, and she smiles.

SONG: "I HAVE SEEN IT ALL"

As the music is about to end in the musical scene, the train disappears in the distance.

But, back in reality when the song stops, the train is still thundering by, as close to Selma and Jeff as it was when the song began.

JEFF:

You don't see, do you?

SELMA:

I had the sun in my eyes. Please, dear Jeff, go now...
and come back with your car at three!

He looks at her a while. She looks calmly at him. He stands another moment. She looks at him pleadingly. He turns around and walks a little. Turns again.... But she still looks at him. He turns and leaves.

51. TRAILER INT/DAY

Selma enters the empty trailer. She takes the envelope with her wages out of her shoulder-bag. She quickly retrieves the taffy tin from behind the panel. She puts it onto the table and opens it. She fumbles inside. It is empty. She fumbles again. She stops, motionless. She puts the envelope back into her bag and goes outside.

52. BILL AND LINDA'S HOME EXT/DAY

Selma knocks. The wind is blowing. Linda answers the door.

LINDA:

(discomforted by Selma's arrival)

Hello, Selma. You're early today. Gene hasn't come back yet.

SELMA:

I just wanted a word with Bill.

Linda nods and looks down.

LINDA:

He took the day off to go to the bank for his box.

Linda looks up at Selma.

LINDA:

I know everything, Selma. Bill told me! I want you to move out.

SELMA:

What do you know, Linda?

LINDA:

That you came onto him and asked him up to the trailer-- but he turned you down.

Selma looks at her for a moment. Then she nods.

LINDA:

(angrily)

You got nothing to say for yourself?

SELMA:

(calmly, shrugging her shoulders)

No. May I talk to Bill, Linda? Please!

**53. BILL AND LINDA'S HOME INT/EXT/BY THE RIVER/EXT/JEFF'S PICK-UP
EXT/INT/DAY**

Selma walks gravely through the house. She opens the door into the study at the back of the house. She enters, closing door quietly behind her. Bill, in semi-darkness, sits at his desk, not in uniform, his face buried in his hands. In front of him is a bag from the local Savings and Loan. Bundles of dollar bills poke out, and beside it is the deposit box from the bank. The turntable is in the study now; he has put on an easy-listening record.

SELMA:

Hello, Bill.

BILL:

(looks up, red-eyed)

Hello, Selma.

SELMA:

You couldn't tell her, after all?

BILL:

(shakes his head)

No. I tried to shoot myself, but I couldn't do that either.

SELMA:

Poor you.

BILL:

Linda saw me up at the trailer. I told her it was you

who wanted_ that you'd fallen in love with me.

SELMA:

Yes, Linda told me.

BILL:

And what did you tell her?

SELMA:

Nothing.

BILL:

You didn't tell her I was lying? Why not?

SELMA:

(calmly)

We promised we'd keep each other's secrets. Mum's the word, right?

Bill looks at her and shakes his head. Selma screws up her eyes.

SELMA:

My eyes are pretty bad today. But isn't that a lot of money you've got there?

Bill looks at the bag from the Savings and Loan. Then he tucks the exposed bills back into it.

BILL:

It's a bag from the bank.

SELMA:

(nods)

Linda said you went to get the box. You put the money in that bag as if it'd been in the vaults, right?

BILL:

I went to the bank to ask for more time. But then I couldn't do it. So I went down to the vault and brought the box home instead. I've done that a couple of times recently, even though it's been

empty. Linda always gets so proud when I sit in here with it.

(he smiles faintly)

But yesterday she asked to see the money....

SELMA:

But it is my money, Bill. You know that, and I have to have the money back.

BILL:

(slightly confused)

Yes, of course.

Bill pulls the bills out of the bag and looks at them. He puts them back.

BILL:

(nods)

You can have it back in a month. One month and I'll pay you back. I just have to meet this month's installment. I only need to borrow it for one month.

Selma stands there silently.

SELMA:

No, Bill. It's no good. I need it now. I want to pay the doctor this afternoon. I won't be able to save up any more. That's over now. I want to pay what I've got-- while I've still got it.

BILL:

Selma, a month. That's all I'm asking. Show a little kindness! Gene doesn't turn eleven until after Christmas!

SELMA:

(shakes her head)

No, Bill. I need my money now, if you don't mind--

Bill gazes at her stiffly. He doesn't move. Selma puts out her hand. She fumbles her way to the

bag in his hand. She takes it.

SELMA:

There was \$2026 and ten cents in the tin. I can't count it, but I trust you. Plus my money from work today--

She gets her wages out of her shoulder-bag. She puts the money into the bank bag.

SELMA:

That makes \$2056 and 10 cents. It'll be enough-- it has to be.

She puts the bank bag into her shoulder-bag. She turns to go. Bill suddenly gets to his feet. He quickly unlocks his desk drawer and pulls out his revolver. He points it at Selma.

BILL:

Stop, Selma.

Selma shows no sign of stopping.

BILL:

I'm pointing my gun at you, Selma.

Selma turns around, smiling.

SELMA:

I don't believe you, Bill. I can't see a gun. I think you're just trying to fool me.

BILL:

A month, Selma. Just a month.

SELMA:

No, Bill.

Selma turns to go. Bill stands there, gun in hand. Then he runs after her. He jabs the gun into her stomach.

BILL:

(whispers)

Now do you believe I've got my gun?

Selma feels the gun.

SELMA:

Yes, I believe you, Bill. But it is my money.

BILL:

No, it's the money I had in my box, and you came here to steal it. STOP THIEF!

Bill shouts.

BILL:

Linda, LINDA!

Linda runs in.

LINDA:

What's the matter, Bill?

Linda sees the gun pointing at Selma.

BILL:

(frantically)

She's stealing our money, Linda! She knew I had the gun in my drawer. She got her hands on it and forced me to hand over the cash. But I got my gun back.

Linda looks at Selma in horror.

LINDA:

What are you doing, Selma? Why are you doing this? Is that why you wanted him-- for his money?

Selma doesn't reply. She shakes her head.

BILL:

Hurry, Linda. Get my handcuffs from the car. I'll arrest her.

Linda looks around in confusion. Then she runs out. Bill keeps his gun in Selma's tummy. Her hands are clasped around it, too.

BILL:

Give me the money and I'll let you go.

SELMA:

Where would I go?

BILL:

Give me the money. Gene doesn't even know you've got it.

He fumbles in her shoulder-bag and takes the bag of money out. Suddenly Selma is desperate.

SELMA:

(screams)

No!

She twists around and tugs on the shoulder-bag. He tries to grab her. The gun goes off. Bill collapses, the money bag in his hand. He has been hit in the shoulder. His other hand clutches his wounded shoulder. Selma now holds the gun. From the police car, Linda hears the shot.

BILL:

You shot me, Selma. I shoulda done it myself. I won't be able to live with this. It's a good thing you shot me.

Selma kneels and reaches for the bag, but Bill grips it tightly. They wrestle for a moment but he won't let go. She points the gun at him.

SELMA:

Give it to me or I'll fire.

BILL:

(shakes his head, whispers)

You'll have to kill me first, Selma. Kill me, Selma. It's what I deserve. I'm begging you--

Linda runs in with the handcuffs. She stops in shock when she sees Bill lying on the floor, bleeding. Selma has the gun trained on him.

BILL:

(doesn't see Linda; whispers, in tears)

Selma-- I beg you! Show some mercy! I always treated you decent! Selma, I beg you!

Bill spots Linda in the doorway. He looks at her for a moment. Bill looks up at Selma.

BILL:

Run, Linda! She's got my gun!

Selma turns towards Linda, gun in hand; the gun happens to point at Linda.

BILL:

Run! Run down to Miller's farm and alert the precinct. Tell them to hurry.

Linda looks at him, and runs off. Selma turns and points the gun at Bill. He looks up at her.

BILL:

You won't get the money until you've shot me!

She pulls at the bag but cannot get it away from him. She tilts her head, listens: the sound of the bit of wood on Gene's bike wheel. He is riding around the house. It is very noisy. Selma aims the gun at Bill's arm.

SELMA:

I will shoot you in the arm, Bill.

She fires. But Bill has managed to turn the gun away from his arm towards his body. She hits him in the belly. Gene doesn't hear the shot over the noise of his bike. Bill still clutches the money. Selma fires repeatedly. She hits him with the gun, but he won't let go. The gun is empty now.

BILL:

(groans)

You gotta kill me first. Oh, Selma, kill me. Do it for real. Please--

Frantic, Selma grabs the metal safe deposit box, hits Bill with it repeatedly. Finally he is motionless. She tears the blood-spattered money bag from his fingers. She sits down, exhausted. There's blood on the blouse she wears over her dress. In the silence she notices the turntable. The record finished ages ago, but the needle is still clicking against the innermost groove. It utters a fractured rhythm. Selma goes into a dream.

SONG "SMITH AND WESSON"

The police cars, one containing Linda, cross the bridge without spotting her. Selma dances more and more crazily in the water. Just before she throws herself into the water in ecstasy, someone grabs her.

It is Jeff. He has seized Selma, who is soaking. He holds her tight.

JEFF:

Selma! You shouldn't go so close to the water... not when your eyes are so poor....

SELMA:

Jeff! What are you doing here?

JEFF:

We had a date-- I was going to give you a lift-- I saw you from the bridge.

SELMA:

(puzzled)

Is it already threeish?

JEFF:

(ashamed)

Not quite-- but hell, I'm always early. If now is not the right time I can come back later--

Selma thinks. She hears the sirens in the distance. Then she smiles at him.

SELMA:

Now's probably the best time, after all.

Selma takes him by the hand. He's surprised. She leads him to his pick-up.

JEFF:

You're drenched--

SELMA:

Yes, but never mind--

Jeff notices the blood on Selma's hands and blouse.

JEFF:

And look, you've cut yourself again-- it's all over your blouse--

They get in. Jeff looks up at Selma, who's dripping wet.

JEFF:

Where to?

SELMA:

The highway-- it'll be a long ride--

JEFF:

Where are you going?

SELMA:

You gonna drive me or not?

Jeff starts the pick-up and drives away from the sirens. They turn right down the highway. Two more police cars pass them from the other direction, turn off towards the bridge.

JEFF:

This place is crazy with cops--

SELMA:

(nods)

Yes, crazy--

54. JEFF'S PICK-UP INT/DAY.

Selma sleeps, the shoulder-bag on her lap. Jeff drapes his jacket around her shoulders as he drives along the empty roads through the forest. She looks like a perfectly satisfied child as she sleeps peacefully.

55. JEFF'S PICK-UP INT/EVENING.

Jeff stops outside a gas station on the edge of town. To the right of the road is a field, with a path leading across it to a stand of trees. Jeff turns off the engine. He wakes up Selma, putting a hand on her shoulder.

JEFF:

Selma--

SELMA:

(collecting herself)

Yes?

JEFF:

We're here.

Selma blinks into the semi-darkness.

SELMA:

The gas station?

JEFF:

Yes, it's right over there.

SELMA:

(nods)

Then we must be right next to the path.

Jeff looks at her. Selma straightens her hair and opens the door. She turns to the field.

JEFF:

May I come with you?

SELMA:

No, you may NOT come with me-- this is my secret--
- I *told* you that!

Selma gets out. She walks warily to the path across the field. Jeff looks at her, concerned.

JEFF:

May I wait for you, then?

SELMA:

(pauses briefly and considers)

Yes, wait for me. No harm can come of that.

Selma finds her way onto the little path. Jeff watches her go.

56. FOREST EXT/EVENING.

Selma follows the path into the forest. She looks up into the bright sky among the dark trees. In a clearing she halts, and feels her way along the right-hand side of the path. She proceeds with her hand stretched out ahead of her until she feels a bench. She moves to the front of the bench and kneels down, facing away from it. In the direction the bench faces, she can feel the edge of a little lake. She takes the bloody money bag from her shoulder-bag. She pulls out the money and puts it carefully into her shoulder-bag. Then she takes off her bloody blouse. She bundles up the blouse and bag and throws them into the water. The blouse splashes as it hits the surface, and sinks, but the money bag gets stuck in some reeds. She doesn't notice. She gets to her feet and sets off.

57. FOREST EXT/EVENING.

She reaches a point where several paths branch off. There is a sign. But it is blank. Selma finds it. She runs her fingers over it. She feels a raised arrow on the wood of the sign. The arrow points down one of the paths. She sets off in that direction.

58. EDGE OF WOODS EXT/EVENING.

Selma walks down the path, which narrows. She fumbles forward. She walks into a rope stretched between the trees. She takes it. She smiles. It leads to a group of large buildings with lights shining in their windows. The rope ends at a gate. Selma rings a bell. After a while an orderly in white appears. He opens the gate. Selma smiles to him.

SELMA:

I want to see Dr. Pokorn_.

ORDERLY

Got an appointment?

SELMA:

Yes, you might say so.

59. HOSPITAL PORTER'S OFFICE INT/EVENING.

The orderly makes a phone call from another room. Selma waits outside. The orderly opens the door and looks out at her, the receiver in his hand.

ORDERLY:

What was the name?

SELMA:

Just tell him I'm Evzên's mother!

The orderly closes the door again and goes on talking.

60. DR. POKORN_'S BUNGALOW EXT/INT HALL/EVENING

The orderly takes Selma by the arm, leads her to the entrance of a modest bungalow on the hospital grounds. He knocks for her. Dr. Pokorn_ appears in casual attire and answers the door. He looks at the orderly and nods. He takes Selma's arm now and leads her inside, shutting the door behind him.

61. DR. POKORN_'S LIVING ROOM INT/EVENING

Selma sits on a chair. Dr. Pokorn_ sits down too. He looks at her.

SELMA:

(in Czech)

Dobr_ vecer, pane doktore!

DR. POKORN_:

(smiles lightly)

Dobr_ vecer!

(switches to English)

You've gotten worse, I see.

SELMA:

It's about Evzên. I want you to operate on him.

DR. POKORN_:

I will have to examine him first.

SELMA:

He *has* been examined back home. He is like me. I know you can give him operation and make his eyes good. That's what the doctor said in Czechoslovakia- he admired you very much. He said if anyone could do it, you could!

DR. POKORN_:

(sits there quietly for a moment)

I can't make any promises.

SELMA:

I know you can cure him.

(she reaches into her sling bag)

I have the money here. I'll send him to you-- I know when it is time.

She puts all the money, coins included, onto the table.

SELMA:

There's \$2056 and 10 cents here. It's not quite what it

costs, but it's all I could get together. You think you can do it for that?

DR. POKORN_:

If I can do the operation, I can do it for that.

SELMA:

(smiles)

This is wonderful! So we have a deal.

Dr. Pokorn_ looks at the money. He gets up and crosses to his desk. He gets out a pad of forms.

DR. POKORN_:

What name shall I put on the receipt? What did you say your name was?

SELMA:

Oh, I don't need a receipt. No, really I don't.

DR. POKORN_:

But I have to know your son's name-- for when he comes in for his operation.

Selma ponders.

DR. POKORN_:

Evzên...--and his last name?

SELMA:

(in doubt; then an idea occurs)

Nov_! If you ask him he will tell you his last name is Nov_, and then you'll know he's been paid for.

DR. POKORN_:

Nov_? Like Oldrich Nov_? The dancer?

SELMA:

(smiles)

Yes.

DR. POKORN_:

He was good back home but he never really made it over here, did he?

SELMA:

No.

Selma is lost in thought. She looks perplexed. Dr Pokorn_ looks up at her.

DR. POKORN_:

Yes?

SELMA:

I just wondered how long you keep the bandage on.
Not too long, I hope. I would hate him to be scared.

DR. POKORN_:

Don't worry, we only do one eye at a time.

SELMA:

(smiles in relief)

That's good. Now I must go.

She gets up. Dr Pokorn_ looks at her.

DR. POKORN_:

You ought to start using a cane now.

SELMA:

Thanks for the advice-- but I'm afraid it won't be necessary.

62. JEFF'S PICK-UP BY THE ROADSIDE EXT/INT NIGHT.

Jeff sits in his car, in the dark. He hears something. It is Selma. She opens the door and gets in. He looks at her.

JEFF:

I was afraid you couldn't find the pick-up in the dark

SELMA:
(nods)

--but I did.

JEFF:
Should I take you home?

SELMA:
Yes, I suppose you should.

JEFF:
What about rehearsal for your fake musical? After
all, it *is* Tuesday!

Selma looks up.

SELMA:
So it is.

JEFF:
But maybe you're not in the mood?

Selma smiles at him.

SELMA:
Sure I am! Always!

Jeff starts the engine.

63. REHEARSAL ROOM INT/EXT NIGHT.

Rehearsals are underway when Jeff and Selma arrive. Boris and Suzan dance together, along with several others. Samuel directs. Behind the pianist, a little girl sits, holding a pair of drumsticks. A whisper spreads when they spot Selma. All activity ceases. The piano music halts. Samuel steps bashfully to the edge of the stage.

SAMUEL:
Hello, Selma.

SELMA:
Hi, Samuel.

SAMUEL:

We weren't sure you'd show up.

SELMA:

Sure I showed up! But I don't think this is my scene.

SAMUEL:

No, but we can do your scene if you like.

SELMA:

No, don't worry. I'll just sit and watch for a while.

Samuel nods and goes back to the others. He talks to them quietly while Selma sits down near the back. Samuel cues the piano player, but nobody makes much of an effort. Most just stare at Selma. Samuel steps backstage and makes a phone call. We can't hear him, but he nods and gazes gravely into the auditorium. He comes back on stage and steps down to where Selma is sitting. Her attention is on the stage and the music. Few people try to complete the scene. Now Selma is troubled.

SELMA:

(turns to Jeff)

Maybe we should leave? Gene might wonder where I am...

SAMUEL:

(quickly)

No. Selma, just stay here. Gene knows this is where you go on Tuesdays.

Selma nods. She sits there for a while. Then she gets up.

SELMA:

No, I must be going, Samuel. He hasn't seen me all day. I don't want him to be frightened!

(looks at Samuel)

I'll come back another day. When you're doing my scene...

SAMUEL:

But, we were just about to do your scene, Selma. Your tapping scene....

He turns quickly towards the stage. He claps his hands.

SAMUEL:

Alright, let's get ready for Selma's scene. We haven't rehearsed it in weeks!

(he turns to Selma)

Come on, Selma. You come from the same convent as Maria. You're like a mother to her. You like each other, but now she is leaving you and your sister nuns, and you let her out of the gate. Intro! Music!

The piano segues from the preceding song. Selma thinks for a moment. Then she shakes her head.

SELMA:

I'm sorry, Samuel, but I really must go.

SAMUEL:

But we've found you a drummer, Selma! Like you wanted. And our little drummer, she's here for the first time tonight! Come and say hi to Selma, Betty!

Samuel beckons for the little girl with the drumsticks. She approaches the edge of the stage shyly. Selma looks up at her. Samuel climbs on stage.

SAMUEL:

Hey, gang, let's do the big finale with Betty and all. No that's right, Selma doesn't like finales... so lets go for "Climb ev'ry mountain"

Everyone gets in line. Piano music and primitive drumming with sticks on a table commences. Selma watches the clumsy performance with its very heavy rhythm and amateur dance steps. She smiles when she hears the words and music as they sing and dance.

She sits down, her attention on the stage. Samuel smiles and they all dance as they look at her. Selma turns to Jeff and smiles.

SELMA:

They are good, right?

JEFF:

Yeah... but still fake...

Selma shakes her head and smiles. She closes her eyes.

SONG: "IN THE MUSICALS #1"

The song ends very abruptly (there are more verses to come): Selma has fallen off the edge of the stage and is caught by two policemen who just arrived out back in the police car. Now that the song is over, they drag her out. Samuel is crying.... Jeff is outraged.... the whole place is in chaos.

64. COURT ROOM INT/DAY.

Selma sits at the defendants' table. Kathy and Jeff sit in the public gallery. Linda is also there, along with everything else that pertains to a trial. The defense attorney sits beside Selma. He looks tired. The district attorney presents his opening arguments.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

The state will show that the accused has not only perpetrated the most callous, well-planned homicide in recent memory, but is also a fundamentally selfish individual devoid of sympathy for anybody but herself, and is so meritorious of our contempt that the jury will convict her without hesitation, and thus open the way to a punishment so severe that it will deter any other murderers from following in her footsteps! ✓

Kathy buries her face in her hands. Selma looks around. Her attention is drawn to the court stenotype machine, which clatters away.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

(points at Selma)

This woman found trust and friendship when she sought refuge in our country. She has repaid such kindness with betrayal, robbery and murder, inflicted upon the very people who opened their homes and hearts to her!

The stenographer's fingers keep pace to the DA's flurry of rhetoric.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

But take care, esteemed members of the jury-- she will try to trick us into believing that she herself is the angel of virtue, spending her hard life only to help her family back home; she will attempt to hide behind her handicap; she will angle for our sympathy with her lack of sight, which she will claim affected

her even before the homicide-- but did she display the same mercy she will ask us to show when she tried to steal away the man who Linda Houston had been married to for 25 years? Or when in cold blood she robbed the Houstons of their life's savings and the wherewithal of their existence? Or when she inflicted on Officer Bill Houston-- one of the most respected members of our community-- the 34 wounds which, after inconceivable suffering, terminated his life? When she butchered him right there on his own living room floor?

Selma is no longer listening.

THE FOLLOWING IS A MONTAGE FROM THE TRIAL:

Linda in the witness box:

LINDA:

She wanted my husband. But he didn't want her, so she killed him, not hesitating even when he pleaded for his life. "I beg you, Selma!" he said, but she just kept firing--

(begins to sob)

He cried and pleaded for mercy. But she showed no mercy-- and you shall be given no mercy either, Selma!

Forensic pathologist in witness box:

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST:

(nods)

The most macabre corpse I have seen in years. The body was inhumanely battered...

The shop assistant from the jewelry shop in the witness box:

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

You came forward because you heard about the case and knew the accused? What do you know of her?

SHOP ASSISTANT:

She ordered a number of items from my store--

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Cheap costume items or expensive jewelry?

SHOP ASSISTANT:

Expensive. Very expensive. She was only interested in the most expensive ones. They made her more beautiful, she said--

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

And did you not have your doubts about commissioning these expensive items for this rather ordinary woman?

SHOP ASSISTANT:

As a matter of fact, I did, but she gave me a real fancy name-- it sounded like she was wealthy-- like royalty or something...

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

(looks at Selma)

A false name, you say? And in your opinion, is she used to spending a good deal of money on-- let's say-- herself?

SHOP ASSISTANT:

She could be... I'm sure she would like to be...

The doctor in the witness box:

DOCTOR:

I examined her eyesight shortly before the homicide. There was nothing wrong with it then. I understand that she has developed an eye condition since then.

Linda replies to the defense attorney:

LINDA:

She asked me about the money, in great detail. And she wanted to be sure where he kept his revolver in the house_

A police detective in the witness box:

DETECTIVE:

We found the bag from the Savings and Loan, but not the money.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

And was it the bag Bill Houston kept in his deposit box at the Savings and Loan?

DETECTIVE:

The very same-- Houston's blood was all over it.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

And how is it linked to the accused?

DETECTIVE:

We found it in the forest where a witness testifies he drove the accused on the day of the homicide. We assume she concealed the money in the forest, and that somebody found the money and disposed of the bag.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

(nods and turns to Selma, who is dreaming)
There are many mysteries in this case. Luckily, these good people here are prepared to help us clarify these mysteries-- since the accused is not inclined to do so--

Norman in the witness box:

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

And although our great country took her in as a refugee, she had nothing but contempt for our system of government?

NORMAN:

(leans over)

She said communism was better for human beings--

apart from-- health care...

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

(nods)

She left her beloved communist state not out of any desire for freedom, or out of love for our country and its principles, but to derive advantage from the advances made by American medical personnel-- to do nothing less than exploit our costly health care system for her own ends-- and yet you say the accused was a loyal worker? Not that loyal, not in my book--

NORMAN:

She was a fine co-worker--

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

But not so fine that in the end you had to fire her because she failed to do her job properly?

NORMAN:

Yes, that's true. She used to day-dream--

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Used to think of herself, in other words. But after all, she had not come to America to work; she had come to America to enjoy its medical science!

NORMAN:

(thinks, and then brightens)

Yes, and its musicals! The American ones were better, she said--

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

(sarcastically)

Its musicals too? So the accused preferred Hollywood to Vladivostok? Well, I suppose it's an acknowledgement of sorts... Musical? So this nation has made *some* contribution at least!

65. COURT ROOM INT/DAY

Selma has taken the stand. The district attorney questions her.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Your sight was poor, you claim; indeed, we have heard as much from your *best friend*—contrary to the expert testimony we have received. But you saw well enough to inflict 34 wounds on Bill Houston. Why did you kill him, actually? If I may have the temerity to ask?

SELMA:

He wanted me to.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

He did? How intriguing! A man with a fine career, some wealth, and a happy marriage? Why would Bill Houston want you to kill him? This is surely the question we must all be asking ourselves--

SELMA:

I promised him I wouldn't say.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Ah, that clears things up immensely! You promised you wouldn't say! In that case we'll just have to take your word for it when you say that the money you stole was your own, despite the fact that Bill Houston's savings also disappeared so mysteriously that very day? And just where did you get your money?

SELMA:

I'd been saving up.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

I suppose you might call it that... and what were these savings to be spent on? You never bought your son so much as a single birthday present, as we've heard.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Honorable members of the jury! You have now heard from the accused's own lips. You must believe her, just as you must believe her when she claims her father's name is Oldrich Nov_ and that every month he has been receiving money from his daughter in America-- as she told the jury and as she has always confided in her best friend. But is she trust worthy? Why not ask the man himself? I call the final witness!

Selma looks up. An older man walks in. Hand on the bible, he is sworn in.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Would you please state your full name?

OLDER MAN

(in poor English)

My name is Oldrich Nov_.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

You used to live in Czechoslovakia?

OLDRICH NOV_:

Yes.

Now I live in California. As you know.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Yes, that's where we found you. Do you know of any other Oldrich Nov_ in Czechoslovakia?

OLDRICH NOV_:

No.

I have never heard of any....

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

And surely you would if any?! So tell me, what is your relation the accused?

Oldrich Nov_ look briefly at Selma.

OLDRICH NOV_:

I

I do not know her.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

You don't know her! So you have not every month received money from her, money that she says was so dearly earned? Maybe you are not her father then?

OLDRICH NOV_: Indeed,

no.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

If the relationship is imagined by the accused, would there be any way of her knowing your name?

OLDRICH NOV_: I

was well-known in Czechoslovakia in my time. She is sure to have seen my name somewhere... because of my profession....

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

Yes, and Mr. Oldrich Nov_, what is your profession? Perhaps that can give us a clue to why this maybe somewhat romantic, certainly communistic woman-- who worships Fred Astaire but not his country-- could have lied and misused your name, to make everybody believe that all her money was spent on a poor father and not her own vanity?

OLDRICH NOV_: I

am an actor.....I used to sing and dance... I did taps... mostly in... musicals!

Selma closes her eyes. She is drifting away to the rhythm of the stenotype machine.

SONG: "IN THE MUSICALS #2"

The song and dance, including Mr. Nov_ and Selma's big tapping solo, is interrupted by the Officer of the Court's line:

66. COURT ROOM INT/DAY

OFFICER OF THE COURT:

The judge brings down his gavel.

67. STATE PENITENTIARY/VISITING ROOM EXT/INT WINTER/EVENING

Winter storm. We move through the gale with Kathy as she walks down the noisy city streets, and into a huge, modern top-security prison. We can tell that Kathy has been this way before.

Now Kathy sits in the silent isolation-block visitor's room. She waits. Selma is brought in; she wears inmate's overalls and is in handcuffs. Brenda, a guard, settles Selma in a chair, then moves a short distance away, where she monitors Kathy's visit. Selma sits opposite Kathy, a sheet of plate glass between them. They sit there for awhile. Kathy looks at Selma, concerned.

KATHY:

How you doing, Selma?

SELMA:

Oh, you know--I'm doing just fine.

KATHY:

I'm so sorry about the supreme court verdict.

SELMA:

Yes, I just heard about it. It's not very pleasant.

Kathy sits there a moment.

SELMA:

How is he?

KATHY:

He's fine, Selma, besides the fact he's not able to see his mother.

Kathy looks urgently at Selma.

KATHY:

Gene wants to visit so bad. Won't you let him see you now? Please?

SELMA:

(sits for a while, struggles with her emotions, shakes

her head)

There's nothing for him to see! He's got you now, Kathy. I know you're looking after him_ I don't even have to ask about that, because I just know you are.

KATHY:

You're a hard woman, Selma. May I give him your love, at least?

SELMA:

Yes, yes, you can give him my love. And tell him to try hard at school! He must hurry up and learn all he can before it is to late.

KATHY:

He is trying hard.

SELMA:

Good.

KATHY:

They said you'd asked to see me?

SELMA:

(nods)

Yes, that's right. About a practical matter.

KATHY:

Yes, Selma? What is it?

SELMA:

On his birthday, Gene will receive a letter from me. I want you to make sure he reads it and does what it says. As I probably won't be here then.

KATHY:

Okay.

SELMA:

(frowns)

He is to take it seriously and do just what it says and not be afraid because there is nothing to be afraid of! Do you promise you'll get him to understand that?

KATHY:

Sure, Selma, I promise.

SELMA:

Thank you, Kathy. You are a real friend.

They sit there awhile. Brenda looks at her watch.

BRENDA:

Time's up, Selma.

Selma nods. She gets up. Something occurs to her. She turns to Kathy.

SELMA:

And he is to call himself Nov_! That is very important. I know it sounds foolish, but he has to. I didn't dare tell you before, in case they wrecked everything. But since the case is closed, I don't think it matters any more.

KATHY:

(puzzled)

Why should he call himself Nov_?

SELMA:

(smiles and looks at Kathy through her blind eyes)
Stop asking so many questions, Cvalda! I'll write all about it in my letter-- so you'll remember.

Brenda takes Selma away. Kathy is left there, looking grave. Then she is led out.

68. STATE PENITENTIARY, ISOLATION BLOCK INT/EVENING

Brenda leads Selma down the corridor to her cell.

BRENDA:

You love your son very much, Selma, I can tell.

SELMA:

(nods)

Yes, of course I do.

BRENDA:

I got a boy of my own back home.

SELMA:

You do? You never told me.

BRENDA:

No, but anyhow, I know what it is to have a son.

They reach Selma's cell on isolation row. Brenda lets Selma in. She locks the door again and opens the Judas hole. Selma turns, well-practiced, and puts her wrists through the hole. Brenda undoes her handcuffs, removes them.

BRENDA:

G'night, Selma, I go off duty in 15 minutes. Sleep tight-- it'll soon be lights out.

SELMA:

(smiles from her side of the door)

They needn't turn them off for my sake.

BRENDA:

(embarrassed)

I'm sorry, Selma, I forgot. I didn't mean to make fun of you.

SELMA:

No, Brenda, I know you didn't. Goodnight, Brenda. You sleep tight too, and say hello to your boy for me.

BRENDA:

I'll do that.

Brenda shuts the Judas hole and goes. Selma is alone in the sterile, modern cell.

69. JEFF'S PICK-UP INT/DAY/WINTER.

Jeff drives through the forest. He pulls in opposite the gas station we saw earlier. He gets out and looks across the field.

70. FOREST EXT/DAY/WINTER

Jeff walks through the forest, along the path that Selma followed. He passes the bench and the lake. He reaches the sign without words where the path goes off in several directions. He stands there for a moment, not knowing which way to go. A boy walks towards him with a white cane. The boy finds the blank sign with his cane. He feels the raised arrow, and sets off down the narrow path. Jeff watches him go, then sets off after him.

72. HOSPITAL GROUNDS NEAR RECEPTION EXT/DAY/WINTER.

Jeff passes a reception building. Inside, there is a receptionist in white. She peers through the half-window at Jeff. He looks around.

RECEPTIONIST:

Can I help you? Are you looking for someone?

JEFF:

(hesitating)

Oh, I'm not really sure...

RECEPTIONIST:

Are you looking for a patient?

JEFF:

Maybe somebody who was a patient once. Do you have a list?

RECEPTIONIST:

Only if it wasn't too long ago. What's the patient's name?

JEFF:

Jezková. Selma Jezková.

KATHY:

(secretively)

New information has turned up...

SELMA:

(suspiciously)

What information?

KATHY:

We know the whole story, Selma. That you spent your money for Gene's operation.

SELMA:

How do you know that?

KATHY:

Jeff found the hospital and talked to the doctor. Selma, why didn't you say anything?

SELMA:

Have you told Gene?

KATHY:

No....

SELMA:

That's good. He must not know until it is time. It's very important!

KATHY:

(frowns, and ponders)

Listen. Don't you see that it would help the jury to know that you were trying to stop your son from going blind? Then they might believe the money was your own savings.

SELMA:

(thinks)

BRENDA:

They haven't phoned yet! But there's still plenty of time.

SELMA:

If they don't phone, what then?

BRENDA:

You'll be transferred to a cell in the other block sometime tomorrow.

SELMA:

The block where they hang people?

BRENDA:

Yes-- where they spend the last day.

SELMA:

(sadly)

And then they have to go the 120 steps....

BRENDA:

They told you that?

SELMA:

And won't you be there, Brenda?

BRENDA:

No, I work over here, but Selma, it's certain they'll grant a stay_ I can't imagine you not getting one.

SELMA:

I'm worried all the same. The waiting is_ so unpleasant.

BRENDA:

Of course it is. Can't you try thinking of something

nice?

SELMA:

(shakes her head sadly)

Not with it being so quiet here!

BRENDA:

What's that got to do with it?

SELMA:

(smiles)

At the factory I could dream I was in a musical and that the machinery was the music-- in musicals nothing dreadful ever happens-- and then I could take just about anything! But it's so quiet here. I thought in prisons people marched about!

Brenda smiles.

BRENDA:

No, there's not much noise around here.

SELMA:

(smiles furtively)

But a bit later they'll turn on the radio.

BRENDA:

There's no radio in the isolation block.

SELMA:

No, but if I listen to the pipes I can hear someone turn on a radio somewhere in the building. They did yesterday. Somewhat later, it was...

Selma is suddenly troubled.

SELMA:

I mean, if listening to the pipes isn't against the rules-

BRENDA:

(smiles)

No. No, it isn't. You just listen away, Selma.

75. STATE PENITENTIARY ISOLATION ROW INT/NIGHT.

Selma sits on her cot, listening to the pipe. At first it's silent, but then a radio can be heard very faintly. Selma smiles. There's music. She shuts her eyes.

SONG: "MY FAVORITE THINGS"

Cross-cut to Brenda, who passes Selma's cell at one stage, outside Selma's dream. She looks at the rapturous, smiling Selma listening to the pipe. Brenda is touched by her joy. Then she goes inside and brings Selma back gently.

Selma wakes up. Brenda smiles at her.

BRENDA:

You got your stay, Selma! I'm sure everything will work out fine! Just fine!

The news has to sink in first, and then Selma hugs Brenda, crying heavily.

76. STATE PENITENTIARY/OFFICIAL VISITOR'S ROOM INT/DAY.

Selma is conducted into this somewhat brighter room by Brenda. There is even a window, and beyond it, daylight. There's a table and two chairs. On one chair sits the new attorney. He gets up and offers his hand to Selma.

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

I'm your new legal counsel, Selma.

Brenda withdraws. The attorney helps Selma onto her chair.

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

I'm quite sure we can have your sentence commuted. All I need is your signature saying you want the case re-opened. I'll have all the paperwork ready by tomorrow.

SELMA:

(smiles)

That sounds wonderful!

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(smiles)

We'll win the jury over, you'll see! The fact that you were fighting for your son is something we can really push. I've plenty of experience in cases like this!

SELMA:

The other attorney had, too, he said...

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(gets out new papers)

Yes, but he was appointed by the court. And you don't get the best counsel that way_

SELMA:

(troubled)

So you were not appointed by the court?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

No. I'm sorry to say that I will have to charge you for my services. But that's all taken care of. I've made a deal with your ladyfriend.

SELMA:

A deal?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

Yes, in regard to my fee. I've accepted the amount she said she could raise.

SELMA:

(warily)

And how much was that?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(with a smile)

Well, I can tell you precisely, because I received an envelope: 2000 dollars and_

SELMA:
2056 dollars_ and 10 cents?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:
(surprised)
Yes, that's precisely right.

Selma nods. She sits there for a moment, suddenly distant again.

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:
Shall we review our tactics? I have a couple of
questions...

Selma does not respond.

77. STATE PENITENTIARY/VISITOR'S ROOM INT/DAY.

Kathy sits happily on her chair, waiting for Selma. Selma is led in. She is angry.

SELMA:
That was Gene's money! The money you gave to the
attorney!

KATHY:
(understands)
We thought saving your life was more important.

SELMA:
It's Gene's money!

KATHY:
Then we'll just have to find money for Gene later.

SELMA:
It's now he needs it. He's 11 next month!

KATHY:
Money will turn up some way or another.

SELMA:

(shakes her head)

Don't you see? Can't I trust my own friends any more? What stupidity, spending that kind of money on a blind woman who'll only spend the rest of her life in prison!

KATHY:

Gene wants his mother-- alive-- no matter where! If you plan to take his mother away from him.....I am not your friend anymore!

SELMA:

I want you to give Gene that money for his operation, just like you promised! I've been saving up since the day he was born! He didn't ask to be born with his mother's sick eyes! Every night I have promised myself that one day, Gene would be able to see his grandchildren.

KATHY:

(gets cross)

If that money is not used to get your death sentence commuted, I'll throw it into the ocean! And I'll make sure Gene never gets his operation! I mean it, Selma! Listen to reason...for once!

SELMA:

I listen to my heart.

Kathy gets into a rage.

KATHY:

You are so stupid! I'll tell you what I'll do....I will tell the police about the money....I will tell them it is the money you stole from Bill. Then they will take the money away....

Kathy gets up angrily and walks out. Selma sits there for a moment; then Brenda fetches her.

78. STATE PENITENTIARY/OFFICIAL VISITOR'S ROOM INT/DAY.

Selma is brought in to meet her new counsel. She takes her chair without help. He is about to

say hello, but she interrupts.

SELMA:

Is the deal with my ladyfriend the kind that can be terminated without costing anything? I mean, can I have my money back?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(surprised)

I can get you a retrial, and I can get you a lighter sentence, Selma. It's not just make-believe.

SELMA:

Can we have the money back?

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(thinks)

If you have changed your mind... then--

SELMA:

Then I want my son to have that money back!

NEW DEFENSE COUNSEL:

(sits for a moment)

You do realize what will happen?

SELMA:

(nods)

I've already told them I don't want any more stays!

The attorney looks at her.

SELMA:

(calmly)

No more stays of execution. That is my decision!

The attorney nods.

78A. NEW SCENE. EXT PRISON.

The street is deckedout with Christmas decorations.

79. STATE PENITENTIARY/VISITOR'S ROOM INT/DAY.

Selma waits. She looks tiny but relaxed. Jeff is conducted into the room by a guard. He sits down on the other side of the plate glass. Selma doesn't notice him. He looks at her for a while.

JEFF:

Howdy, Selma!

Selma wakes up at the sound of his voice. She smiles.

SELMA:

Hi, Jeff!

They don't know how to begin.

JEFF:

Gene says thank you for the comics...for his birthday....

SELMA:

He liked them?

JEFF:

(nods)

Sure.

SELMA:

I'm glad you were there, Jeff.

JEFF:

I had hoped it would be different....you and me...

SELMA:

Yes, but that was not to be--

(worried that she has hurt him)

Not that you aren't a good man, because you are! It was me... You were the best that could have happened to me.... Truly....

JEFF:

(nods a little, turns serious)
Gene wanted to be there when it happens, but they
said no. He is too young...

SELMA:
(first sad, then nodding)
That's good. Who ever put that crazy idea into his
head?

JEFF:

(gathers his courage)
I'll be there instead....If you want me to....

SELMA:
And Kathy?

JEFF:
I don't think so, Selma. She's still pissed...you know
her.

SELMA:
(smiles)
Yes...yes I do. It's kind of you, Jeff....if you think
you can take it....yes, I would be very happy if you
would be there....

They sit quietly for a moment.

JEFF:
Is there anything you want to ask me, Selma?

SELMA:
No....I don't think so?

JEFF:
About Gene....or anything....

SELMA:

(nods)

No, no....it's out of my hands now. He's living with Kathy....that couldn't be better....she's pissed now....but she's my friend....

JEFF:

And you still don't want to see him...or talk on the phone? There is time for that, you know....it would make him real happy....

SELMA:

(smiles)

I doubt that it would make anybody real happy. The sooner he gets used to the idea that I am not around, the better. He has his own life now.

Jeff sits for a while. Then he straightens up in the chair.

JEFF:

I will go now, Selma.

SELMA:

Yes, it was nice of you to come. Goodbye Jeff.

JEFF:

Goodbye, Selma. You are a beautiful lady.

Jeff gets up. Then he stops.

JEFF:

Why did you do it? Why did you have Gene, when you knew he would have your eyes?

She shakes her head.

SELMA:

I've no excuse, Jeff!

Jeff looks at the tormented Selma with great pity.

SELMA:

(hunches up and speaks very quietly)
I just so much wanted to hold a little baby in my
arms.

Tears are running down Selma's cheeks now. Jeff looks at her with mute compassion.

80. STATE PENITENTIARY/ISOLATION ROW INT/NIGHT.

Selma sits restlessly in her cell. Brenda arrives with two other guards. She knocks.

BRENDA:

It's time, Selma.

Selma gets up and turns her back to the Judas hole so Brenda can cuff her. Brenda opens the door.

BRENDA:

Good-bye, Selma.

SELMA:

Good-bye, Brenda.

The two guards lead Selma away down the corridor. Brenda watches her go.

81. STATE PENITENTIARY DEATH ROW WITH TWO CELLS INT/NIGHT.

The two guards conduct Selma into one of the cells. They help her to sit down on the bare mattress. Then they let themselves out. Selma sits on the bed as if turned to stone. She listens, but there isn't a sound.

82. STATE PENITENTIARY DEATH ROW WITH TWO CELLS INT/NIGHT.

Selma's last meal is being served....its a hamburger meal from McDonalds.

GUARD:

Your meal, Jezková!

Selma nods, but otherwise ignores the meal.

83. STATE PENITENTIARY DEATH ROW WITH TWO CELLS/CORRIDOR AND GALLOWES CHAMBER INT/NIGHT.

Selma lies on the mattress, awake, blind eyes wide open. She hears somebody coming. She

closes her eyes; she does not want it to be now. She takes a deep breath.

SELMA:

Is it now?

GUARD:

(off)

Yeah, it's now.

The guard has arrived with some officials.

SELMA:

Good.

The guard opens the door with all its handles. Selma gets up with difficulty.

SELMA:

I'm sorry. But I'm a bit nervous.

She tries to move her feet, but it they don't really work....

SELMA:

(whispers sadly)

I don't think I can walk....

Two of the guards step in and lift her up.

BRENDA:

(off)

She can walk on her own!

Brenda is one of the little group in the corridor.

SELMA:

(surprised)

Brenda! I didn't think you worked here!

Brenda is in her ordinary clothes, not her prison garb.

BRENDA:

I don't. But they let me come. I asked to be allowed...

SELMA:

Oh, thank you. I'm so pleased you came! But I am afraid that I will have to disappoint you...I am not so brave. My legs really don't work well today....

BRENDA:

You can do it, Selma.

SELMA:

120 steps. I can't do one!

Two of the guards look at Brenda.

BRENDA:

I'll be next to you....I thought I could be here and make you some sound. If I march.....you'd have something to listen to....remember?

Brenda stamps her feet in a rhythm. Selma listens.

SELMA:

(smiles and shakes her head)

But Brenda....

BRENDA:

No, Selma....just listen! Come on, you can do it!

Selma considers. She listens to Brenda's stamping. She closes her eyes and concentrate on the sound. She manages a step. But it is very difficult.

BRENDA:

That's one....

One of the other wardens helps Brenda with the stamping. Selma starts to move. On the way down the corridor, other staff members seem to fall in to.

BRENDA:

...two, three, four.....

Selma smiles. She can do it now. The rhythm is pronounced now.

SONG: "THE 120 STEPS"

Suddenly before the last number everything becomes quite. "120" is heard with only Selma's fragile voice. Selma is in the gallows chamber. She is standing on the trap door. Everybody is quiet now. She wakes up. Then she realizes where she is. She looks around like an animal catching a scent. She is puzzled. Down to her left are the witnesses sitting in the half darkness. A man steps up to her with the hood. Selma feels him near and falls down on the floor.

BRENDA:

(in pain)

Selma, you have to stand...

SELMA:

(down on the floor)

I'm sorry...I'm so sorry.....

BRENDA:

Try to stand, Selma.....

Selma can't. Two guards are coming up to her carrying the "Collapse board".

BRENDA:

(with no conviction)

She can stand.... You don't have to do that.

The guards are placing Selma on the wooden board. They strap her to it with the leather straps. Selma is sobbing. The guards are in light panic. They place the board on the trapdoor. It looks grotesque. Brenda is heartbroken. The man with the noose is not feeling good. He puts it on Selma's neck. It is difficult because of the board. He forces her head violently forward in order to do it. The man with the hood shakes his head.

MAN WITH HOOD:

The hood.....!

The man with the noose is in doubt if he should take it off again in order to place the hood first.

SELMA:

(in a panic)

A hood.....nobody has said anything about a hood....

BRENDA:

(completely broken)

It's so you don't see, Selma....

SELMA:

(tearful)

Nobody said anything about a hood. I can't breathe.
Why do I have to have a hood on...I am scared,
Brenda!

BRENDA:

(gets angry and looks at the others)

She can't see anything anyhow! Do you have to put
that damn hood on? She's blind! Don't you realize?

Brenda grabs the hood and walks angrily up to the officer responsible for the execution.

BRENDA:

She's blind, for Christ's sake!

The officer considers.

OFFICER:

I'll have to call...

The officer phones from the other room. The execution process is thrown off track; confusion spreads. Selma is in a rage of despair. She screams.

SELMA:

Gene! Gene!

The guard down by the door that leads from the witness area to the stairs leading to the gallows, leaves his post to talk to another guard. Kathy is down there. She gets up from her chair. She is tormented by Selma's crying. Kathy runs towards the door to the stairs. She manages to slip up the stairs.

SELMA:

(trying to free her from the straps)

Gene...GENE!!!!

Kathy forces her way to Selma. She hugs her.

KATHY:

He is just outside! Gene is just outside....

SELMA:

Kathy?

Selma smiles and doesn't believe it.

KATHY:

I have something for you from him.....

Kathy is violently pulled back from Selma by a guard, but she has just time to put something in Selma's hands. Selma feels it. It's Gene's glasses. Selma freezes. She is moved.

SELMA:

(quietly)

He's had the operation--!

KATHY:

(smiles and shouts)

And he's fine... he sees just perfect, Selma...he will see his grandchildren. And he is just outside... he is close to you, Selma...

She stands there a moment, nodding happily. She smiles.

SELMA:

Gene...

KATHY:

You were right Selma....listen to your heart....of course you are right....listen to your heart....

Back in the office, officials still discuss the hood. Selma's mind wanders off. Motionless, she tries to listen. Now she hears her heart. She smiles at its pulse, its steady, rhythmic sound.

SONG: "THE NEXT-TO-LAST SONG"

In a dizzying rush, the trap door opens with a terrifying crash that puts an irrevocable stop to all song.

Selma's body spins. There is a dreadful sound as her fall is arrested by the rope around her neck. Her neck snaps. There is silence. Selma dangles lifelessly at the end of the rope. Everyone watches mutely. The warden comes down the stairs with the doctor. The curtains are drawn. The doctor puts the stethoscope to Selma's chest. He listens. An officer comes in and puts the hood on her. The doctor listens to the increasingly spasmodic, fragile heartbeat. He shakes his head at the officer. Everyone is silent now.

We cut to an image of the curtain seen from the outside. It is a fixed camera shot. Now we hear the struggling heartbeat. Infinitely quiet, the closing music starts. It follows the rhythm of Selma's irregular, fading pulse. It sounds like a phonograph record that can't decide on a single tempo. To this music we see images of Selma from the film double exposed onto our scene. Joyful images appear from what we have witnessed. Now the heart finally burns out. With one last strained beat, it ceases. So does the music. All is silent. The camera moves back now and cranes up and out into the night through the roof. All is black. The film is over!

THE END

THE MUSICAL NUMBERS

- Selma's first musical absence (just a couple of seconds)
- Selma's second musical absence (a bit longer)
- First complete number: "The Clatter Song" (in the factory, with Kathy, Norman and the labourers)
- "I've seen it all" (With Jeff, the passing train, and various people on board the train etc)
- "Smith and Wesson" (after Bill is killed; with Bill, Linda and Gene)
- "In the Musicals" (In the rehearsal rooms and courtroom, everyone from both scenes)
- "My favourite things" (Alone in her cell)
- "The 120 Steps" (on the way to the gallows, with warders and prisoners)
- "The next-to-last song" (with the noose round her neck)

The first real song is "The Clatter Song". An explosion of joy which describes the principle that drives Selma and the film. "I've seen it all" is a little more melancholy, but in its best moments it is a happy, hopeful song. The song after Bill's death consists of both deep sensitivity and insight, and forward-moving rhythm. "In the musicals" is escapism on the grand scale—Selma's version of a musical in her own world, and not a tad worse than the best and greatest you've ever seen in your life! "My favourite things" is lonely, dreaming. "The 120 Steps" is an example of something that cannot be done without music ... and finally, the great farewell song.

THE CLATTER SONG

This is where Selma's fascination with the rhythms of real life burst forth. It's an explosion of joy. She is able to link her musical dreams with wherever she is right now! She sings about Kathy/Cvalda, but she could just as easily sing about herself. She sings that Kathy has another side to her ... but it is also Selma's other side. The first of the two happy songs. It has to pay tribute to the side of us that seeks rhythm, music and dance everywhere ... but first and foremost, a game! And she loves it so much ... playing!

The song and the number are also the point at which Kathy and Selma finally come together. The coming together they never achieve in real life. It shows the love that they never express in words. And an acceptance of the dreaming, humming side represented by the music. Selma has previously reined herself in so much that she has been able to keep this side to her evenings with the amateur dramatic group—a spare time activity. It is a relief to let it become part of life ... not wise, perhaps, but a relief!

Sources of rhythm:

The basic rhythm is the sound of the machines. Otherwise, the sounds of people and machines working together. The sounds of work. Of course, the specific sources will depend on the location. But the clash between man and machine, tools, and objects is what we are after.

Song Lyrics:

Kathy: This clatter makes me sick ...

Selma: Clatter?

Kathy: I hate these machines!

Kathy falls asleep on her chair. Selma is fascinated of her new word.

Selma: Clatter?

Selma goes from one machine to another and they clatter or clang, she puts it into a word for each machine. After the third machine her co-workers gets the idea and suggest the words. After one round she just points at the worker by the machine and he says the word. These words become the rhythm that carries the song. They are there all the time and sometimes they stand alone. Here and there, there are little stomp-interludes, where the workers don't say the words, but play on their machine instead.

Selma:

Clatter, crash, clack....

The workers:

Racket, bang, thump,
rattle, clang, crack,
thud, whack, bam....

The workers (as Selma points at them):

Clatter, crash, clack,
Racket, bang, thump,
rattle, clang, crack,
thud, whack, bam....

Selma:

My best friend Kathy
Ain't the Kathy you know
She is a Kathy
That should star in a show

she is a dancer
but she doesn't show it
she's got the legs
but you wouldn't know it

a clatter machine
greet her each day
it taps out a rhythm
and sweeps her away

a clatter machine
with a beautiful sound
a room full of noises
that spin her around - and I love her!

The workers:

Clatter, crash, clack,
Racket, bang, thump,
rattle, clang, crack,
thud, whack, bam....

Selma:

My best friend Cvalda
Is a Cvalda! you know
She's jolly and fat
And she stars in the show

she is a dancer
and she really knows it
she's got the legs
and she really shows it

a clatter machine
greet her each day
it taps out a rhythm
and sweeps her away

a clatter machine
with a beautiful sound
a room full of noises
that spin her around - and I love her!

The workers:

Clatter, crash, clack,
Racket, bang, thump,
rattle, clang, crack,
thud, whack, bam....

Stomp interlude.

Selma:

Think for a minute,
it all becomes clear
When Kathy is laughing
it's Cvalda you hear

Kathy is faithful
But Cvalda is free
Kathy and Cvalda
Are good company!

Kathy:

Here comes a dancer
I want you to know it
Here comes the Cvalda
I'm ready to show it

Kathy/Selma:

a clatter machine
with a beautiful sound
a room full of noises
that spins her around
and I love her ...

The workers:

Clatter, crash, clack,
Racket, bang, thump,
rattle, clang, crack....

Kathy wakes up on her chair. She yells at Selma as she runs from runaway bobbin to runaway bobbin ... Etc.

I'VE SEEN IT ALL

This is Selma's attempt to persuade herself that losing her eyesight isn't so bad really, shown in a dialogue with Jeff. She manages to persuade herself pretty well, except when Jeff puts the most unpleasant questions. Because there are still things she would like to be able to see ... more than anything in the world. The song is also a farewell to these things. The train is the great, forward-moving destiny that nobody can stop. Selma recalls the things she's seen and remembers: if you've seen once flower, you've seen them all ... But deep down inside she knows this is not true.

Sources of rhythm:

The basic rhythm comes from the train as it slowly passes. Things on the wagons ... it must mainly be laden with timber that can be used for percussion. Every part of the wagons and loco, everything in the carriages ... but also things far away, with the train in the distance: perhaps a few things that belong to people herding sheep in a field, loading them onto trailers ... familiar, domestic locations and sequences from a long way off are included in the dance. There may be a couple of trucks on the wagons. Their horns and so forth could be used. But everything on board the train is big, and cannot be budged. Selma can hammer on the doors of the wagons, but the train is invulnerable.

When the train is passing Jeff notices that Selma seems to be in doubt of where to look for him. As she can't hear him in the noise. He throws a little rock that lands close to her. She looks in the direction and speaks:

Selma (with a smile): Get on your way then!

Jeff: You don't see do you?

Selma (Turns surprised towards where he really is. Unhappy that she has been fooled by his trick): What is there to see?

Song lyrics:

Selma:

I've seen it all, I've seen the trees,
I've seen the willow-leaves dance in the breeze.
I've seen a man killed by his friend,
And lives that were over before they were spent.
I've seen what I was - I know what I'll be
I've seen it all - there is no more to see!

Jeff:

You haven't seen elephants, kings or Peru!

Selma:

I'm happy to say I had better to do ...

Jeff:

What about China? You've seen the Great Wall?

Selma:

All walls are great walls, if the roof doesn't fall ...

Jeff:

You haven't met Ginger, and never Astaire!

Selma:

Oh, no, but I really, I really don't care ...

Selma drifts off, leaving Jeff behind.

Selma:

I've seen what I was - I know what I'll be
I've seen it all - there is no more to see!

Jeff catches up with Selma.

Jeff:

You have never been to Niagara Falls?

Selma: I have seen water, its water, that's all ...

Jeff:

The Eiffel Tower, The Empire State?

Selma:

My hairdo was bigger on my very first date

Jeff:

And your future husband? The home that you share?

Selma:

Oh, no, but I really, I really don't c ...

Selma stops with a painful look on her face, knowing that she can't fool anybody with this answer. She hurries on with pathos.

Selma:

I've seen it all. I've seen a war
I've seen children starve. I don't know what for
I've seen a mouse on the first day of spring,
And all of the colours that nightfall can bring.
I've seen what I was - and know what I'll be
I've seen it all - there is no more to see!

Jeff:

You haven't seen people you still are to meet!

Selma:

I won't see the problems they struggle to beat ...

Jeff:

What about films? You did miss "King Kong"!

Selma:

But never a film with a song to be sung ...

Jeff:

And the son of Gene with his father's hair?

Selma:

Oh, no, and I really, I really don't c ...

Selma stops again in a painful pose, knowing that she is about to tell a lie. She hurries on.

Selma:

I've seen it all, I've seen the dark
I've seen the brightness in one little spark.
I've seen what I chose – and seen what I need,
And that is enough. To want more would be greed.
I've seen what I was - and know what I'll be
I've seen it all - there is no more to see!

The People on the Train:

You've seen it all and all you have seen
you can always review on your own little screen
The light and the dark, the big and the small
Just keep in mind - you need no more at all
You've seen what you were - and know what you'll be
You've seen it all – there's no need to see!

SMITH AND WESSON

The first of the great emotional numbers. It consists of a great emotional sequence addressed to Gene, and a sequence where Linda and Bill reveal their love and help Selma to get away before the police arrive. It's a dialogue between Selma's melancholy and her survival instinct ... the latter represented by Bill and Linda, now completely transformed (he has revived) who forgive Selma and admit their guilt. Initially only Bill dances along, but then Linda joins in. Finally Selma is alone by the river. She looks at the lovely river with all its play potential. She dances into it, plays with the rhythms, and is almost completely engulfed when Jeff turns up and tears her out of her dream.

Sources of rhythm:

In the house:

The basic rhythm is the gramophone record with the needle stuck in the last groove. This is only used for the sentimental part of the song. Additional rhythms come from Gene's bike and the stick in its wheel when he speeds up and slows down.

In the garden:

The basic rhythm is the crack of the flag rope against the flagpole carrying the Stars and Stripes. This is only used for the sentimental part of the song. Additional rhythms come from Gene's bike and the stick in its wheel when he speeds up and slows down, possibly on his way across the bridge. When Selma reaches the river we have all the water sounds she can make: stamping her feet in it, whacking it with branches, gravel from the river bed spread out into the water, boats bumping, pillars, things that have been chucked off the bridge and are now scattered about on the river bed. Drain pipes discharging....she stops and starts the jets of water with her hand to make a sound. An old bucket upside down beneath the jet of water, resulting in unrhythmical drumming. Tins from the river bed, filled with grit. If there is a dam nearby there'll be plenty to use. Finally the police car sirens in the distance blend with the music.

Song lyrics:

SELMA:

Black night is falling
The sun is gone to bed
The innocent are dreaming
As you should - sleepyhead
Don't worry 'bout tomorrow
Mama's here....
Here....

BILL:

You better hurry Selma, before you know it they will be here

SELMA:

Oh Bill, I have hurt you!

BILL:

Not more than I hurt you

SELMA:

I can't believe I hurt you!

BILL:

And you are in need!

GENE:

You did what you had to do!

You did it for me ... you did it for me!

SELMA:

There is no excuse for taking a man's life!

BILL:

There is no excuse for taking a child's sight!

SELMA:

I can't be forgiven ...

BILL:

You are forgiven ...

SELMA:

Black night is falling

The sun is gone to bed

The innocent are dreaming

As you should - sleepyhead

Don't worry 'bout tomorrow

Mama's here....

Here....

LINDA:

You better hurry, the police is just down the road ...

SELMA:

Good, they're right on time.

LINDA:

If you run there's still time!

SELMA:

But why should I run?

LINDA:

Why should you run? (Nods towards Gene who is coming round the house on his bike.)

GENE:

You did what you had to do!

You did it for me ... you did it for me!

SELMA:

I took your husband's life, it's horrible!

LINDA:

I took my husband's life, it's horrible!

SELMA:

I can't be forgiven!

LINDA:

You are forgiven!

SELMA:

Black night is falling

The sun is gone to bed

The innocent are dreaming

As you should - sleepyhead

Don't worry 'bout tomorrow

Mama's here....

Here....

IN THE MUSICALS

This is where all of Selma's pent-up musical clichés blaze up. This is where the idea of the musical must ring forth loud and clear. It must be so beautiful that it hurts, drawing on anything to hand. We must dig down to the ultimate clichés. And they cannot lie! Everything is so simple here that un-truth has no place. The characters we're familiar with dance out their dreams. We had sensed them before, but now they're danced. In the song, cues from real life are negated by the truth. We are far from the elaborations of the courtroom.

This is where Selma is picked up and carried. This is where all the great poses from the movies are to be found.

Sources of rhythm:

In the rehearsal room:

The basic rhythm is the little girl beating the floor with her drum sticks. The rehearsal room is also the gym, so the old, very used apparatus that has been pushed aside can be used: a ball, a springboard, etc. The bars on the emergency exits can be pushed up and down. The waste bins on the floor have lids that rotate when you bang them, and then flip back and forth for ages. The old curtainless curtain rails can be taken down and shaken till the rings jangle. Mops in buckets ...

In the courtroom:

The basic rhythm is the click of the court recorder's typewriter. Anything in the courtroom that can be hit or kicked: if there is a bell on the judge's bar, everything except the bell will be used ... we avoid the obvious! The members of the public can use the change in their pockets. They can rattle it, or chuck it onto the floor to be danced on. A chair in each hand means eight legs for beating out rhythms (they can be rotated). Perhaps there is a phone on one wall ... if you hit the wall next to it, its bell rings. Evidence can also be used: Bill's gun, the box from the bank. The water jug can be emptied as it is struck. Folding chairs can be folded and unfolded. Air vent grills pulled away from the wall can be played on (specially if they have dampers). Fire-fighting equipment could be used, perhaps. Lots of chairs could be picked up and put over people's heads, to be used as drums in synchrony. A kick delivered to a cold water fountain makes it bubble.

MY FAVOURITE THINGS

'This is the classic from "The Sound of Music". It's in her solitude that she returns to the source ... the genuine musical number. She is back in the cinema ... she starts by listening and singing with her back to us ... in one corner. But she gets up and moves around the room.

Sources of rhythm:

The basic rhythm is the music Selma hears through the central heating pipes; we hear very little but the bass tones. The law of gravity has been suspended (like in the old Fred Astaire film). She stamps around the cell walls. She kicks and taps on the bars of the door, and kicks at the fluorescent light fixture on the ceiling. She jumps on the window with its view of the wall opposite.

THE 120 STEPS

When it dawns on Selma that Brenda and thus the other warders want to help her stamp out the rhythm so that she'll be carried along by the music, she is moved, but not sure it will be enough. She and we know that there are 120 steps. But everyone helps, and slowly Selma manages to take the first step. Selma can scarcely move her feet. But gradually she copes. The lyrics will be nothing but the numbers as they're counted out. The warders start, then the other prisoners, and finally Selma joins them. Selma is almost able to have fun with the fact that she is the one conducting the song by her footsteps. She stops coquettishly and smiles when everyone thinks she has had enough. She starts again, and with her, the entire musical number. At the final number (spoken only by Selma) the music stops and she is on the trap door. Then silence. The dance will be the most sensual we've seen so far. Bodies on both sides of the bars. A worker's song will lead the procession onwards ... like a row of harvesters in a field. Everyone dances their character. The number is about bodies that are shut in. Bodies that cannot move the way they ought. About wasted opportunities. About physical power. But all these things are just grace notes to the most important dance ... the dance that's Selma's last.

Sources of rhythm:

The basic rhythm is the warders' stamping feet. The prisoners make rhythm by themselves: hands clap, cheeks, tummies, etc., are patted. Bodies on walls and grills. Rhythms beaten on chess boards with the pieces. Warders rattle their bunches of keys and throw them to each other. Prisoners shake their cell doors, making them click. They kick their toilets and metal washbasins. Oral sounds: groans, shouts ... sensual. Perhaps there are people outside, peering through the corridor windows (it seems to be night-time). Cleaning staff? (Remember—we must appear to be completely realistic, inasmuch as only the objects and people who'd really be present can appear in the number! But we can play with the acoustics ... the prison should become a kind of giant stone instrument, crammed to bursting point with movements that cannot be performed.

THE NEXT-TO-LAST SONG

The great farewell song for Gene. This is the strongest side of Selma. She sings completely a cappella, to the sound of her own heartbeat. She has given Gene life ... she already lives on through him and his eyes. With no self pity. She is severe on Gene now. It is important that he understand—and live on—in the right way.

Sources of rhythm:

The rhythm is Selma's heartbeat. It fades slowly as life leaves her.

Song lyrics

Now dry that tear from your eye
Don't make your mother so shy
You know that big boys don't cry

Ooooh - baby don't fear
Ooooh - the music is here
Ooooh....

Be strong, now you have to care
For these two eyes that we share
So use them well - be aware

Ooooh - of all you see
Ooooh - looking for me
Ooooh.....

This isn't the last song
I'm singing for you.
There won't be a last song
Between Me and you.
The next to the last song
Is for you ...

Promise to do as I say:
Promise to cherish each day
Promise to work and to play

Ooooh - don't look away
Ooooh - I'm here to stay
Ooooh....

(One verse of heartbeat only)

This isn't the last song
I'm singing for you.
There won't be a last song
Between me and you.
The next to the last song
Is for you ...

When I have gone out of sight,
You don't have to turn out the light,

Just let it burn through the night.

Ooooh - the more you see
Ooooh - you're seeing for me
Ooooh....

Remember what I have said:
I told you: wrap up the bread.
Remember to make your bed.

Ooooh - have no fear
Ooooh - the music is here
Ooooh....

This isn't the last song
I'm singing for you.
There won't be a last song
Between me and you.
The next to the

Selma falls through the trap-door ...